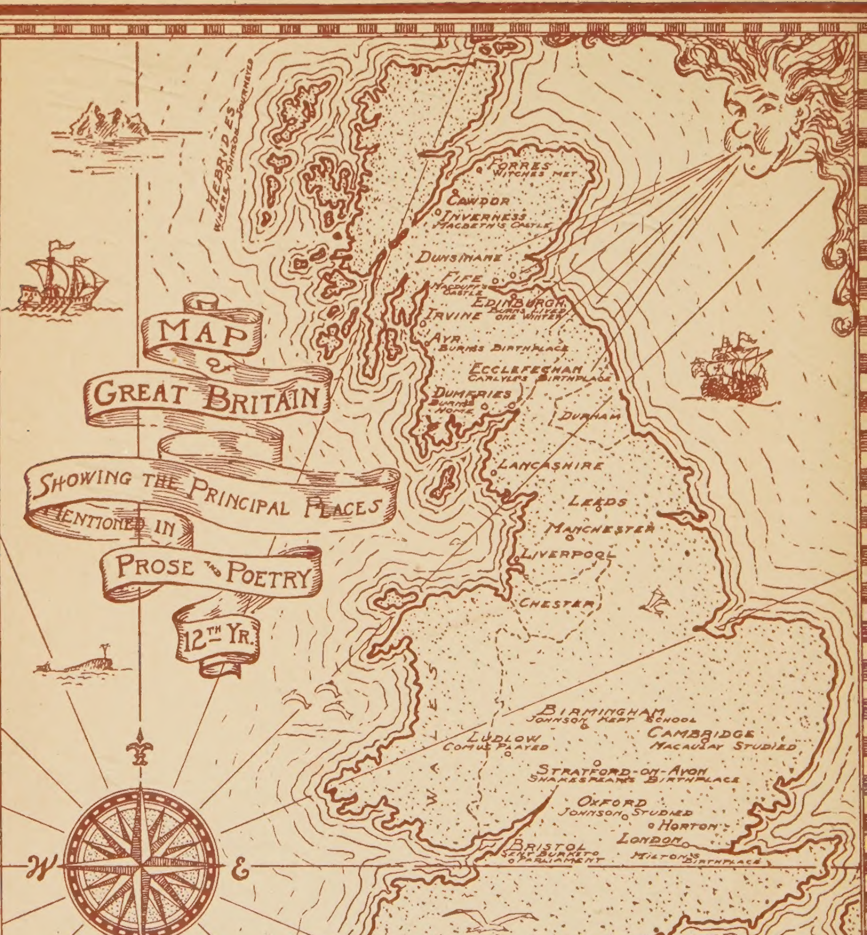
PROSE AND POETRY

TWELFTH YEAR

McGRAW-PARRY


MAP
of
GREAT BRITAIN
SHOWING THE PRINCIPAL PLACES
MENTIONED IN
PROSE and POETRY
12TH YR.
HEBRIDES
WHERE JOHNSON JOURNEYED
FORRES
WITCHES MET
CAWDOR
INVERNESS
MACBETH'S CASTLE
DUNSINANE
FIFE
MACDUFF'S CASTLE
EDINBURGH
BURNS LIVED ONE WINTER
IRVINE
AYR
BURNS BIRTHPLACE
ECCLEFECHAN
CARLYLE'S BIRTHPLACE
DUMFRIES
BURNS HOME
DURHAM
LANCASHIRE
LEEDS
MANCHESTER
LIVERPOOL
CHESTER
WALES
BIRMINGHAM
JOHNSON KEPT SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE
MACAULAY STUDIED
LUDLOW
COMUS PLAYED
STRATFORD-ON-AVON
SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE
OXFORD
JOHNSON STUDIED
HORTON
LONDON
MILTON'S BIRTHPLACE
BRISTOL
SENT BURKE TO PARLIAMENT
FRANCE
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D. MAXFIELD.

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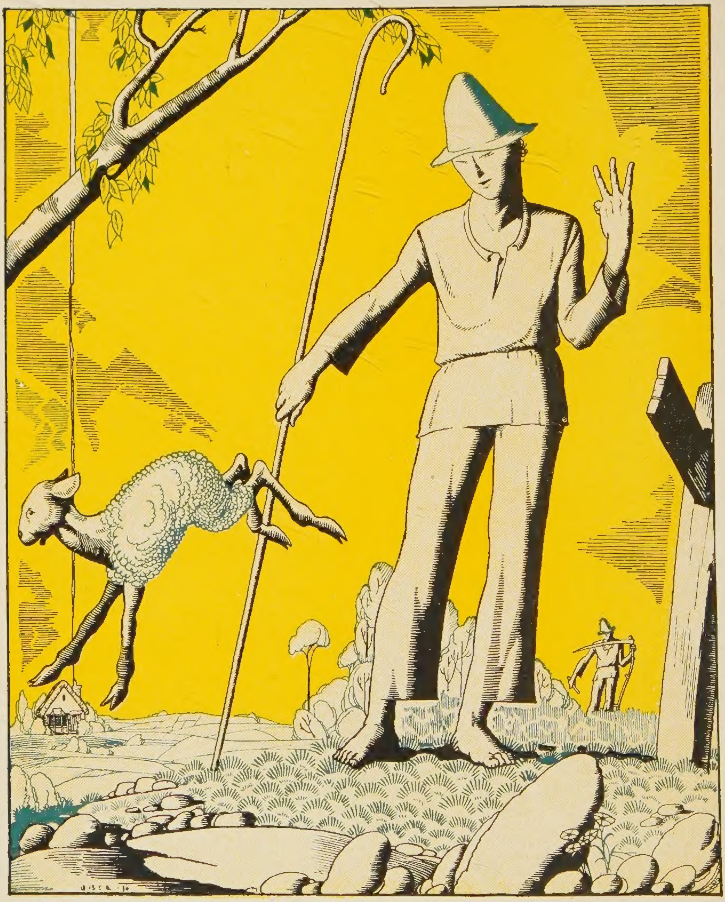

And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Milton's *L'Allegro* (Lines 67–68)

PROSE AND POETRY

FOR THE

TWELFTH YEAR

COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS IN ENGLISH

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CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE iv

SECTION I

MINOR POEMS .... *John Milton* 1

(*L'Allegro, Il Penseroso,* and *Comus*)

SECTION II

MODERN PLAYS 87

(*10 One-Act Plays. See list, page* 88)

SECTION III

FAREWELL ADDRESS .... *George Washington* 269

FIRST BUNKER HILL ORATION .... *Daniel Webster* 307

SECTION IV

ESSAY ON JOHNSON .... *Thomas B. Macaulay* 347

ENGLAND IN 1685 .... *Thomas B. Macaulay* 417

(*Chapter III of the History of England*)

SECTION V

ESSAY ON BURNS .... *Thomas Carlyle* 453

SELECTED POEMS .... *Robert Burns* 552

(*15 Songs and Poems. See list, page* 454)

SECTION VI

SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA .... *Edmund Burke* 579

SECTION VII

MACBETH .... *William Shakespeare* 709

SECTION VIII

A STORY OF *English and American* LITERATURE ... *H. Ward McGraw* 871

PREFACE

GENERAL—This book is the fourth in a series of literature books designed to meet the requirements of secondary schools. The Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Year PROSE AND POETRY books have met with widespread approval and this Twelfth Year book now completes the series.

THE COURSE—The selections throughout the PROSE AND POETRY series have been chosen after comparing and examining courses of study of various states and cities. After compiling results from questionnaires sent to several thousand classroom teachers, it was found that most courses followed rather closely the College Entrance Requirements. Therefore that general standard has been followed in the series, and the material chosen for the Twelfth Year book satisfies seven units of the College Entrance Requirements.

MILTON'S MINOR POEMS—The companion poems *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso,* and the masque, *Comus,* comprise this group. Because of the wealth of classical allusion contained in these poems, it is quite impossible for the student to gain a true appreciation of them without a knowledge of the meanings of the mythological references and obsolete words. The many footnotes which will be found in connection with the poems make clear the frequent classical allusions and bring out the meanings of the poems.

MODERN PLAYS—Probably no movement of recent times, both in and out of school has grown with such speed as has interest in the reading and acting of plays. A recent investigation has disclosed that more than 7,000 high schools in this country are giving one or more courses which find expression in the reading and production of plays. In this volume ten one-act plays are given, including tragedy, farce, comedy, satire, melodrama, and fantasy. The one-act play has a distinct form and structure which distinguishes it from the full-length play, and comparisons between it and the Shakespearean drama will provide interesting class material.

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS and WEBSTER'S FIRST BUNKER HILL ORATION—The period of the American Revolution produced a great number of writings on the subject of politics and government. Among the best known of these will always be Washington's *Farewell Address* which came straight from the author's heart, born of his solicitude for the young republic. "As the generations have come and gone, the *Farewell Address* has grown dearer to the hearts of the American people, and the children and children's children of those to whom it was addressed have turned to it in all times, and have known that there was no room for error in following its counsel."

Daniel Webster is the greatest orator this country has produced and "In the *First Bunker Hill Oration*," says Henry Cabot Lodge, "Mr. Webster touched his highest point in the difficult task of commemorative oratory. In that field he not only stands unrivaled but no one has approached him." Webster's orations are an exception to the general truth that most orations make poor reading. Valuable for their lucid exposition of fundamental principles, they are also worthy of study for their careful construction and for their bold use of rhetorical devices.

MACAULAY'S LIFE OF JOHNSON and ENGLAND IN 1685—There is no better writer than Macaulay to make pupils appreciate better things in literature and history. Without parallel is his eye for significant and picturesque detail, his gift of accumulating these swiftly in order of climax, and stating them in a vivid, forceful, and imaginative manner. It was his style which first attracted the attention of Macaulay's contemporaries, and it is his style which to-day makes his *Essay on Johnson* one of the most popular of high school classics. But he is at his best in his *History of England,* of which Chapter III is included in this volume under the title of *England in 1685.* His gift for clear and vivid writing produced a picture of life and manners during the years covered which makes the work a classic, unsurpassed to-day.

CARLYLE'S ESSAY ON BURNS and SELECTED POEMS—"This criticism of a Scotchman by a Scotchman has in it a tender appreciation that makes this essay one of the most satisfying criticisms of Burns in our language." In connection with the *Essay* will also be found a sketch of Burns's life from his letters and from Lockhart's *Life of Burns,* the purpose of which is to give the principal facts in the life of Burns which Carlyle had in mind when he wrote his critical essay. The Selected Poems include as far as possible the titles discussed in the *Essay.* An effort has also been made to show Burns's range of poetic power and the poems include songs, and satirical, descriptive, and patriotic poetry, as well as nature and philosophical poems.

BURKE'S SPEECH ON CONCILIATION—No speech is better fitted for study by American students than Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America.* The student comes into contact with an orderly and practical mind—a mind, furthermore, that understood human nature in the mass. He also comes into contact with one who knew how to express his thoughts with accuracy and with clarity. The student who reads the *Speech* carefully and intelligently until he makes contact with the mind of the author cannot help developing himself some of those qualities which distinguish the mind of Burke.

MACBETH—*Macbeth* completes the well rounded course of Shakespearean plays as presented in the PROSE AND POETRY series. From the comedies of *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice* in the Ninth and Tenth Year books, there are logical development and gradation of difficulty to the historical play, *Julius Caesar,* in the Eleventh Year book, and to the tragedy of *Macbeth* in the Twelfth book. *Macbeth,* with its wonderful dramatic structure and striking and vital lessons, makes a fitting conclusion to a Shakespearean course for high school students.

THE STORY OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE—The selections throughout the PROSE AND POETRY series cover a wide range both in time and in types, but the student who has read only detached selections is not likely to have formed any idea of the continuity of literature nor to have seen much relationship between it and the development of the race. It is therefore the purpose in the sketch of English and American literature included in this volume to give the connected facts in the story and to show as well as space permits the influences which have been at work in the shaping of our literature.

CONCLUSION—As a course of well-rounded literature selections, arranged in an attractive way for school use, with interesting study features, the present book of the PROSE AND POETRY series should meet every want and need for a year's work and study. It is commended to you.

THE PUBLISHERS.

MILTON'S MINOR POEMS

L'ALLEGRO · IL PENSEROSO · COMUS

SECTION I

L'ALLEGRO

IL PENSEROSO

COMUS

JOHN MILTON

L'ALLEGRO 3

IL PENSEROSO 14

COMUS 23

THE LIFE OF MILTON 68

THE INTERPRETATION OF *L'Allegro* AND *Il Penseroso* 72

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE READING AND STUDY OF *L'Allegro* AND *Il Penseroso* 74

Comus—THE MASK 78

Comus—THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 79

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE READING AND STUDY OF *Comus* 80

APPRECIATION TESTS
I EXERCISES IN MOVEMENT 81
II TESTS FOR IMAGERY—IMAGE-MAKING WORDS 82
III TESTS FOR IMAGERY—VARIETY 82
IV TESTS FOR MOOD AND FEELING IN POETRY 83
V MEMORY TESTS 85

L'ALLEGRO

JOHN MILTON

HENCE, loathéd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,

TITLE—*L'Allegro,* from the Italian, meaning "the cheerful man." See the *Interpretation of L'Allegro* at the end of this section.

2. CERBERUS (sûr′ bẽr ŭs)—The huge three-headed dog, with a serpent's tail, which in Greek mythology stood guard at the approach to Hades. The myth that Cerberus and Midnight were the parents of Melancholy is Milton's own invention.

3. STYGIAN (stĭj′ ĭ ăn)—That is, in the region of the Styx, the chief river of Hades.

4. HORRID SHAPES, AND SHRIEKS, AND SIGHTS UNHOLY—Milton possibly had in mind the shapes which Vergil saw on his approach to Hades—"a group of beings who are Griefs and avenging Cares, pale Diseases and melancholy Age, Fear and Hunger that tempt to crime, Toil, Poverty, and Death, forms horrible to view." Quoted from Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable.*

5. UNCOUTH—Uncanny, wild.

6. JEALOUS WINGS—Because unwilling to let light enter.

And the night-raven sings;
There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownéd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,

7. Night-raven—The night-owl, night-heron.

8. Ebon—Black, from ebony.

10. Cimmerian—The land of the Cimmerians in classic mythology was a region of mist and darkness across the stream Oceanus, which surrounded the world of men. Beyond the land of the Cimmerians was Hades.

12. Yclept—Called.

12. Euphrosyne (ū frŏs′ ĭ nē)—One of the three Graces, lesser deities, who as their designation indicates were the goddesses of gentility and the polite amenities. Euphrosyne means joy or cheerfulness. The other two were Aglaïa (brightness) and Thalïa (bloom). They were generally regarded as daughters of Zeus.

14. Venus—The goddess of love and beauty. "The Hours and Graces surrounded her, twining odorous garlands and weaving robes for her that reflected the hues and breathed the perfume of crocus and hyacinth, violet, rose, lily, and narcissus."—Gayley's *Classic Myths*.

16. Bacchus—God of wine and revelry. He was generally represented as wearing a crown of ivy.

17. Some sager—That is, some wiser poets. That Mirth (Euphrosyne) is the child not of Venus and Bacchus but of Zephyr and Aurora is Milton's own invention. See the *Interpretation of L'Allegro*.

19. Zephyr.—The West Wind.

19. Aurora—The Dawn.

20. A-Maying—The allusion is to the old English custom of going out into the fields early on May-day to celebrate the return of spring and bring in the "may" or hawthorne. Look up the customs associated with the May-pole. Read also Robert Herrick's poem *Corinna's Going a-Maying* which is based on the May-day ceremony:

> There's not a budding boy or girl this day
> But is got up and gone to bring in May.
> A deal of youth ere this is come
> Back, and with white-thorn laden home.

There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks and wreathéd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovéd pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,

24. Buxom—In Milton's time the word "buxom" meant blithesome.
25. Nymph—That is, Euphrosyne or Mirth.
27. Quips—Flashes of wit.
27. Cranks—Plays on words.
27. Wanton wiles—Sportive tricks.
28. Becks—Bows.
28. Wreathéd—Compare with our expression "a face wreathed in smiles."
29. Hebe (hē′ bê)—Goddess of youth, and cupbearer to the gods.
31. Care—Care is the object of derides.

34. Fantastic—The word as Milton uses it here designates movements in the dance made according to the fancy of those dancing.

36. Mountain-nymph, sweet liberty—Here is another of Milton's inventions. The idea of a mountain-nymph, Liberty, was suggested to Milton, it is safe to say, by the love of freedom and hatred of tyranny which has seemed peculiarly characteristic of mountain dwellers, notably the Swiss.

37. If—On condition that.
39. Her—Liberty.
40. Unreprovéd—Innocent.

41. To hear, etc.—Here begins the delineation of the "unreprovéd pleasures" which appeal to the cheerful mood. See the *Interpretation of L'Allegro*.

41. The lark—This line furnishes a good illustration of the fact that complete appreciation of any piece of literature depends upon the reader

And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn,

being able to bring his own experience to bear on what he reads. One who has never heard "the lark begin his flight, And, singing, startle the dull night" calls up no image, and relives no experience. For example, take such a poem as Riley's well-known *When the Frost Is On the Punkin.* Much of the appeal of this piece is in its power to recall vividly an enjoyable experience or sensation—the feel of the air "so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days." A description of the habits of the skylark will help the reader understand Milton's line, but it cannot make him hear the skylark's song. The lark is a small brownish bird, which nests on the ground. In flight it sings almost continuously, soaring up until it becomes lost to sight and then dropping to its nest. Shakespeare's famous lyric:

Hark! Hark! The lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus gins arise—

describes the song of the lark, high in the heavens, at dawn; and Shelley in *To a Skylark* has succeeded in a famous stanza in conveying the effect which the invisible songster had on him at evening:

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an *unbodied joy* whose race is just begun.

43. WATCH-TOWER—An allusion to the great height to which the lark soars.

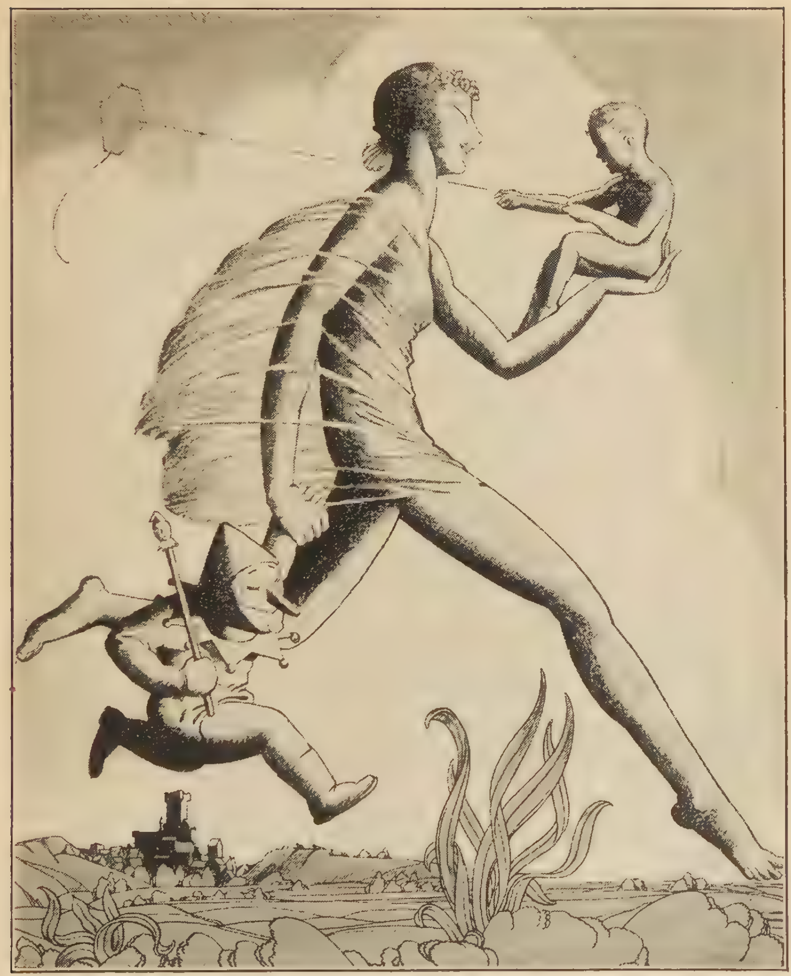
45. THEN TO COME—The infinitive "to come" is co-ordinate with "to hear." The sense is: To hear the lark . . . [and] Then to come . . . Have you ever gone to the window the first thing on a bright morning to look out? Why?

45. IN SPITE OF—In defiance of.

46. BID GOOD-MORROW—That is, greet the dawn.

48. EGLANTINE—Honeysuckle.

54. SLUMBERING MORN—Morn is personified.



Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,

L'Allegro (Lines 25–26)

From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;

55. Hoar—White with blossoming trees.

58. Hedgerow elms—The elms which grow along the lines of the hedges. In England fields and lanes are bordered not by fences as in America but generally by dense hedges.

59. Right against the eastern gate—That is, toward the sunrise.

60. Sun—Sun is personified and compared to a great monarch setting out on a procession of "state" richly robed and attended by a great retinue of clouds in livery.

62. Dight—Dressed or garbed.

66. Mower whets his scythe—Milton lived before the day of harvesting machinery.

67. Tells his tale—Counts his sheep.

71. Russet—Reddish-brown.

71. Lawns—Here used to indicate an open space in the midst of trees, not a lawn in the modern sense.

71. Fallows—Fields plowed but not sown.

74. Laboring—"Teeming, heavy with rain."

75. Pied—Variegated. Pied modifies meadows, and alludes to the color effect which the daisies produce. Have you ever looked down from some hilltop on "meadows trim with daisies pied"?

Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighboring eyes.
Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savory dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound

77. Towers and battlements—Windsor Castle is visible from the neighborhood of Horton where Milton wrote *L'Allegro*. See the biographical sketch of Milton.

78. Bosomed—Embosomed.

79. Some beauty—Windsor Castle is one of the royal residences. The reference is to some beauty of the Court.

80. Cynosure—The center of attraction. The term "cynosure" is applied both to the constellation of Ursa Minor (Little Bear) and to the North Star, which is in Ursa Minor.

83. Corydon and Thyrsis (Cŏr′y̆ dŏn, Thẽr′ sĭs)—Shepherds in one of Vergil's poems of country life. Used here to indicate two English shepherds or rustics. 85. Messes—Dishes.

86. Phyllis—A shepherdess in one of Vergil's poems. Here used, of course, to designate an English maid.

87. Bower—Cottage.

88. Thestylis (thĕs′ ty̆ lĭs)—A shepherdess in one of Vergil's poems.

89. If the earlier season lead—That is, if it is in the haying season which is earlier, of course, than the grain harvest.

91. Secure—Free from care.

92. Upland hamlets—"Little villages among the slopes, away from the river meadows and the hay-making."

92. Invite—Appeal to the fancy.

93. Ring round—That is, ring one after another from the churches in the "upland hamlets." Milton is here describing a holiday, or holy-day, such as was celebrated in his day in every village.

94. Rebecks—An old-fashioned fiddle or violin. For an illustration see *Winston's Simplified Dictionary*.

To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by Friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn

97. AND YOUNG AND OLD COME FORTH TO PLAY—See the description of Sweet Auburn in *The Deserted Village,* lines 15–34 in *PROSE AND POETRY Tenth Year.*

102. FAERY MAB—"A fairy accustomed to steal cream from dairies in days before the blame was laid upon the cat."—Lamborn.

102. JUNKETS—A dish made of curds mixed with cream, sweetened and flavored.

102. EAT—This is the past tense of eat (ĕt)—the form that Americans spell and pronounce *āte.*

103. SHE—One of the villagers, a country wench.

103. PINCHED AND PULLED—The allusion is best explained by quoting from Ben Jonson, a contemporary of Shakespeare and Milton:

> This is Mab, the mistress fairy,
> That doth nightly rob the dairy.
> And she can hurt or help the churning,
> As she please, without discerning;
>
> . . . . . .
>
> She that pinches country wenches
> If they rub not clean their benches,
> And with sharper nails remembers
> When they rake not up their embers.

104. HE—Another of the villagers, a country fellow, or rustic.

104. FRIAR'S—Friar Rush. This was a Christmas game. Milton evidently refers to Will-o'-the-Wisp who led travelers astray. See any dictionary for an explanation of will-o'-the-wisp.

105. DRUDGING GOBLIN—Robin Goodfellow, another fairy or brownie, who in return for a bowl of cream set out for him would do no end of work during the night.

108. CORN—Grain.

That ten day-laborers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear

110. Lies him—We say "lays him."

110. Lubber—Drudging. Note the description of Robin. He was a pretty husky fairy.

110. Fiend—Used here simply to designate a supernatural being, a demon, not necessarily evil.

113. Crop-full—That is, stomach-full, well fed.

114. Ere the first cock his matin rings—Fairies, goblins, etc. had to return to their abodes before sunrise.

115. They—The villagers.

117. Towered cities—In Milton's day, the great towered gates and much of the wall of London were standing.

119. Where throngs of knights . . . high triumphs hold—Tournaments, such as the one described in Ivanhoe (See *PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year,* pages 608–632), had long since ceased to be held by Milton's day. There survived, however, a kind of mock tournament, known as a "triumph" or "joust of peace," which was the occasion for brilliant assemblage and courtly ceremony. It is to such a "triumph" that Milton alludes.

120. Weeds of peace—Garments of peace, there being no actual fighting to the death as in the old tournaments.

122. Rain influence—That is, on the contestants.

123. Of wit or arms—In the days of Elizabeth, especially, both "wit" that is, speeches of elaborate courtly compliment, and "arms," mimic contests with swords, lances, and pikes, featured these triumphs.

124. Her grace—That is, the favor of the Queen of Love and Beauty.

125. There—That is, at Court. Court weddings were matters of elaborate ceremony and display.

125. Hymen—The god of marriage. Hymen was represented as wearing a yellow robe and bearing in his hand a torch.

In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream,
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learnéd sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild,
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,

127. Pomp, and feast . . . and antique pageantry—A court wedding was the occasion also for elaborate public entertainment.

128. Mask—A dramatic entertainment, generally written for some particular occasion. *Comus* by Milton is a good example. The mask, or masque, was a much favored form of entertainment at Court in the days of Milton. One characteristic of its production was elaborate staging.

128. Pageantry—Pageants were frequent and extravagant in Elizabeth's day.

131. To the well-trod stage—That is, to the theater, well-trod, because in Milton's youth London had a number of well-trained companies of professional players.

132. If Johnson's learnéd sock be on—That is, to see if one of learnéd Ben Jonson's comedies is playing. The "sock" was a term used to designate comedy, and the "buskin" to designate tragedy. The "sock" was a light shoe worn by actors in comedy on the ancient stage, and the "buskin," a laced boot, was worn by tragic actors.

133. Fancy's child—Imagination's child. Milton refers here to those lighter, gayer and more fanciful products of Shakespeare's imagination—the comedies such as *As You Like It, Twelfth Night,* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

134. His native wood-notes wild—An oft repeated distinction between Shakespeare and Jonson is that Shakespeare had nature and Jonson had art. The meaning is that the latter taught himself to write drama by studying the dramas of the ancients whose rules he followed, whereas the former was a dramatist "by nature," so to speak, and was guided not by learning but by native ability only.

135. Eating cares—That is, cares that eat the heart.

136. Lap—Enfold.

136. Lydian—A term designating one of the ancient Greek "modes" or scales, of which there were three: the Lydian, Dorian, and Phrygian. The Dorian was "soft and effeminate."

137. Married to immortal verse—He would have immortal verse set to the Lydian airs.

138. The meeting soul—That is, "the soul which lends itself to the music."

In notes with many a winding bout
Of linkéd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurýdice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

139. Bout—What in music is called a "phrase."

141. With wanton heed and giddy cunning—"Wanton heed" refers to playing that is frolicsome and sportive yet done with care and accuracy. "Giddy cunning" refers to the rapidity of skill shown by the player. If you have seen a violinist play a light, frolicsome piece which called for almost lightning swift manipulation of his instrument, you will know to what Milton, who was himself an accomplished musician, refers.

142. The melting voice through mazes running—That is, while the voice blending with the music accompanies it through its rapid and intricate changes.

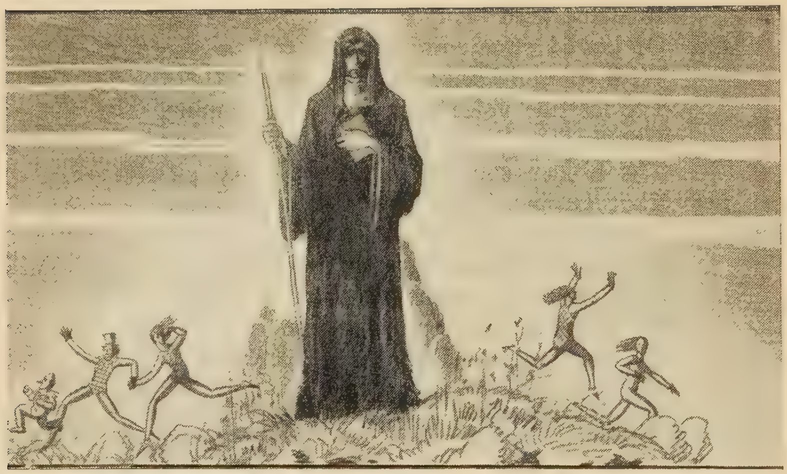
143. Untwisting all the chains that tie the hidden soul of harmony—That is, freeing the soul from the worries and cares of life and restoring harmony to it.

145. Orpheus—Son of Apollo and Calliope, the muse of epic poetry.

147. Elysian (é lĭzh′ăn)—The allusion is to the Elysian fields, the abode of the blessed or good, in Greek mythology.

149. Pluto—God of Hades or the underworld.

150. Eurydice (ū rĭd′ĭ sē)—A nymph, the wife of Orpheus. Orpheus was inconsolable at the death of Eurydice. Taking a lyre, given him by Apollo, he made his way to Hades. His music "drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek" and so moved that god that he granted Orpheus's petition to let Eurydice return to the upper world. One condition was attached to this permission. Orpheus who was to precede Eurydice was forbidden to look back, but as he was about to leave Hades he turned to see if Eurydice followed, whereupon she was carried back and lost to him.



IL PENSEROSO

John Milton

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
  The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
  Or fill the fixéd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
  And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
  As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
Or likest hovering dreams,

Title—*Il Penseroso,* "the thoughtful man." See *The Interpretation of Il Penseroso* at the end of this section.

2. Without father bred—They are wholly the offspring of Folly, and, therefore, quite senseless.

3. Bested—Profit, avail.

4. Fixéd—Serious.

6. Fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess—The object of "possess" is "fancies." The meaning is: Fill foolish imaginations with showy ideas.

8. Motes—The minute specks seen in sunbeams.

9. Likest—Most like.

The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,

10. Pensioners—Members of a retinue or body-guard.

10. Morpheus—The god of sleep.

14. To hit the sense of human sight—To look upon.

18. Prince Memnon's sister—An Ethiopian Prince of great beauty who fought on the side of the Trojans in the war with the Greeks. He was the son of Tithonius and Eos (Aurora). He had a sister Hemera who Milton thinks must have possessed her brother's beauty.

19. Starred Ethiop queen, etc.—The allusion is to Cassiopea, a queen of Ethiopia, who boasted that she was more beautiful than the Nereids, or Sea-Nymphs. Offended by her boasting, the sea-nymphs prevailed upon Poseidon to send a monster to ravage the coast of Ethiopia, and the queen's daughter, Andromeda, was exposed on a rock to appease the monster. Both Cassiopea and Andromeda were later changed to constellations—which explains "starred Ethiop queen."

23. Vesta—Goddess of the hearth and the divinity of the home. She was the first-born child of Saturn and Rhea.

24. Solitary Saturn—Called solitary probably because for a long period preceding the rule of the Olympian gods, Saturn (Cronos) was the sole lord of heaven and earth.

29. Woody Ida—The woody slopes of Mount Ida on the island of Crete.

30. Fear of Jove—Saturn, or Cronos, was told by his parents that he

Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retiréd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring

---

should be dethroned by his children. It was Jove (Jupiter or Zeus) the sixth child of Saturn who led the revolt against his father, and established the Olympian dynasty. Cronos, to prevent the fulfillment of the prophecy, swallowed the first five of his children as soon as they were born, but his wife, Rhea, caused Jove to be spirited away and concealed on Mount Ida.

33. Grain—Color, hue.

35. Sable stole of cypress lawn—A black robe of fine lawn or crape.

36. Decent—Shapely.

37. Wonted state—Accustomed dignity of bearing.

39. Commercing—Communing, conversing.

40. Rapt—Absorbed.

41. Still—Motionless.

42. Forget thyself to marble—That is, forgetting everything in holy contemplation until you become as motionless as a figure cut from marble.

44. Them—"Thine eyes."

46. Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet—Among the ancients, fasting was practiced in connection with certain religious observances as a preparation for the sacrificial meal.

47. Muses—The lesser deities who inspired the artistic powers in mortals. They were nine in number, the daughters of Jove and Mnemosyne (Memory).

48. Aye (ā)—Ever.

49. Retiréd—Living in retirement, withdrawn from the haunts of men.

Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,

52. Him that yon soars on golden wing—The allusion is to the vision of Ezekiel, related in Chapter 10: "Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. . . . And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub, etc." These cherubims are nameless in the Scriptures. It is Milton's invention that one was Contemplation.

55. Hist—This is a verb in the imperative. Its object is Silence. It means to urge along without making noise.

56. Philomel—The nightingale. See the legend of Philomela in Gayley's *Classic Myths*.

57. Plight—Mood, strain.

59. Cynthia—Diana, goddess of the moon, called Cynthia because she was born on Mount Cynthus in Delos. Her chariot was drawn across the heavens by two white steeds. Milton substitutes dragons.

59. Yoke—Team.

60. The accustomed oak—The oak over which the moon is accustomed to rise.

61. Sweet bird—Philomel.

62. Most musical—The nightingale, like the lark, has often inspired the poets. Read here Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* and Arnold's *Philomela*.

67. Wandering—So called, since the moon, in contrast to the punctual and regular sun, seems to be a wanderer in the heavens, appearing and disappearing at odd times.

68. Highest noon—The highest point in the sky, the zenith.

Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
75 Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removéd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
80 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
85 Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
90 What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons that are found

73. PLAT—Plot. 77. AIR—Weather. 78. STILL REMOVÉD—Quiet, secluded.

80. TEACH LIGHT TO COUNTERFEIT A GLOOM—That is, the effect of the dim light from the embers is such that the gloom seems to result from the light.

83. BELLMAN'S DROWSY CHARM—The allusion is to the call of the watchman who went about the village streets at night swinging his bell and calling the hours.

87. OUTWATCH THE BEAR—The allusion is to the constellation of the Bear which never sets in northern latitudes. Hence to outwatch it, means to sit up until dawn.

88. THRICE GREAT HERMES—Hermes Trismegistus (thrice-great), an ancient philosopher and king. The meaning is, of course, to sit up reading a book by Hermes.

88. UNSPHERE THE SPIRIT OF PLATO—That is, call back the spirit of Plato from the "sphere" to which it passed after Plato's death. Plato was a great Greek philosopher. The meaning here is, of course, to read Plato's works, and thus "unsphere" him.

89. TO UNFOLD . . . THIS FLESHLY NOOK—That is, to discover what becomes of the soul after death. The question is discussed in the *Phaedo,* one of the works of Plato, which gives an account of the death of Socrates.

93. AND OF THOSE—That is, And to tell of those.

93. DEMONS—Spirits, genii.

In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin; that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,

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96. Found in fire . . . or with element—There was a belief among the ancients that before man there was created a class of beings—variously referred to as spirits, genii, demons, angels—servants of God, sometimes called "sons of God," who were His servants in the creation and, afterward, in the government of the world. There is reference to these demons in Plato. Medieval philosophers divided them into four classes corresponding to the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—of which they believed the universe made up. These demons were believed to be "in harmony" with the planets also—to have "a true consent with planet and with element." They were, of course, factors in human destiny since the planet or star under which one was born was thought to exert an influence on the individual and since the body itself was composed of the four elements. The "genius" or "demon" of Plato, however, is rather an attendant spirit or guardian angel who accompanies man through life and leads him afterward to the other world.

98. In sceptred pall—That is, in the garb of royalty, bearing a sceptre. This personification of Tragedy indicates that Milton had in mind the great tragedies of the Greek dramatists Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, all of whom wrote plays dealing with the legendary royalty of ancient Greece.

99. Thebes—Sophocles, in particular, dramatized the legend of Œdipus, King of Thebes, a city of Boetia.

99. Pelops' line—The allusion here is to the tragedies of Æschylus and Euripides dealing with the great hero Agamemnon and his children.

100. Tale of Troy—Sophocles and Euripides both dramatized incidents of the Trojan war.

101. Or what (though rare) of later age—That is, of Milton's own time. Although Milton in *L'Allegro* refers to the comedies of Shakespeare and Jonson, he does not seem to have entertained so high an opinion of their tragedies as he did of those of the Greeks.

103. Sad Virgin—That is, Melancholy—the pensive Nun of line 31.

104. Musæus—A legendary Greek poet whose power to move men was similar to that of Orpheus. None of his poems has survived; hence, Milton's desire to raise him from his bower.

And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,

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105. Orpheus—See the note to line 150 of *L'Allegro*.

110. Cambuscan—The allusion here is to *The Squire's Tale,* which was left unfinished by Chaucer. Geoffrey Chaucer, sometimes called the "Father of English Poetry" lived 1340–1400. His greatest work was *The Canterbury Tales*. (See the *Story of English Literature* in this volume.) *The Squire's Tale* is the story of Cambyuskan, a king of Tartary, his sons, Algarsyf and Cambalo, and his daughter, Canace. As Cambyuskan was holding his birthday feast there came riding in at the hall door a knight upon a steed of brass, bearing in his hand a broad mirror of glass and upon his thumb a ring of gold—presents for the King and Canace from his master, "King of Araby and Ind."

112. Who had Canace to wife—*The Squire's Tale* does not get this far.

113. Virtuous—Magic.

117. Tunes—Verses.

118. Turneys—Tournaments.

119. Of forests, and enchantments—An allusion to Spenser's *Faerie Queene,* a long allegorical romance "of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds," written in the days of Queen Elizabeth. (See *The Story of English Literature*.) The First Book of the *Faerie Queene* tells the story of the Knight of the Red Crosse and Lady Una who are lost in an enchanted forest.

120. Where more is meant than meets the ear—The *Faerie Queene* is an allegory, a story which has a secondary meaning.

121. Pale—Dim.

122. Civil-suited—That is, soberly garbed.

123. Tricked—Gaily adorned.

123. Frounced—With hair curled.

124. Attic boy—The allusion is to Cephalus, the young huntsman, whom Aurora (the Dawn) stole away because of his beauty.

125. Kerchieft—Enveloped in a kerchief or head-cover, to cover her "frounced" head.

While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archéd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavéd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,

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130. Minute-drops—Drops falling at minute intervals.
134. Sylvan—Sylvanus, god of woods and fields.
139. Close covert—A secluded recess. 141. Garish—Glaring.
142. Bee with honeyed thigh—How do bees carry pollen?
145. With such consort as they keep—"They" refers to "waters" and "bees." "Consort" means harmony. The allusion is to the harmony of murmuring water and murmuring bees.
148. Wave at his wings—That is, hover at the wings of dewy-feathered sleep. 149. Lively portraiture—Life-like pictures.
151. Sweet music breathe—That is, let sweet music breathe.
153. Good—That is, by some spirit who is good to mortals.

Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give;
And I with thee will choose to live.

154. GENIUS—The spirit or demon of the wood.

155. DUE—Duteous. 156. PALE—Enclosure. 157. ENBOWÈD—Arched.

158. MASSY-PROOF—Ponderous, able to support the mass resting on them.

159. STORIED WINDOWS—Windows of stained and leaded glass portraying scenes from Biblical stories. 159. DIGHT—Arrayed.

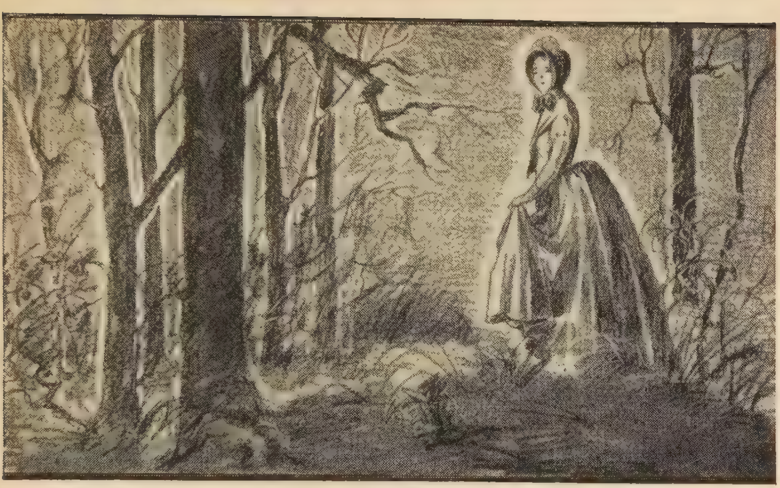
163. SERVICE HIGH—That is, the high service of the Church. It is probably that in lines 155–166 Milton had in mind King's College Chapel, Cambridge, said to be the "finest college chapel in existence and probably the finest example of its style or architecture in the world, in size, form, and decoration. It contains some of the best glass and wood carving in England." The service at King's College Chapel, moreover, has always enjoyed high renown.

168. HERMITAGE—That is, a cottage or simple dwelling in some retired spot.

169. HAIRY GOWN AND MOSSY CELL—Used figuratively to describe a plain and simple way of life. Milton does not mean that he will don the hairy gown of the religious hermit.

170. SPELL—Study.

174. TO SOMETHING LIKE PROPHETIC STRAIN—That is, to an understanding of the mysteries and secrets of creation.



COMUS

John Milton

A MASQUE * PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634

The Persons

The Attendant Spirit, afterwards in the habit of Thyrsis.
Comus, with his Crew.
The Lady.
First Brother.
Second Brother.
Sabrina, the Nymph.

The first Scene discovers † a wild wood

The Attendant Spirit *descends or enters*

Spirit. Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes

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* Masque—See *The Historical Background of Comus.*

† Discovers—Discloses, reveals.

1. Spirit—The Spirit here serves as a Prologue and gives the situation out of which the action develops.

Of bright aerial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confined and pestered in this pinfold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants
Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of eternity.
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapors of this sin-worn mould.
  But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
Took in, by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove,
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles

3. Insphered—Enclosed within a sphere. Milton very likely had in mind in these opening lines, the picturesque Ptolemaic conception of the universe, which in his day still had its supporters. In brief, according to the Ptolemaic system the earth was the centre of the universe. It was surrounded by a number of crystalline transparent spheres. The space or zone between these spheres was also known as a "sphere" or a "heaven." Each planet occupied one of these "heavens." The sixth was that of Jupiter or Jove. The attendant spirit comes from this heaven or sphere where "bright aerial spirits live insphered."

7. Pestered—Encumbered, shackled.

7. Pinfold—Pen, pound for animals—meaning the Earth.

10. This mortal change—This earthly, or mortal, life.

13. Golden key—That is, Virtue.

16. Ambrosial—Here used to mean delicately or exquisitely fragrant in contradistinction to "rank" which means rancid or strong smelling.

16. Weeds—Garments.

17. Mould—That is, the Earth.

18. Neptune—Or Poseidon, god of the sea.

20. Took in, by lot—According to Homer, after Jove and his brothers, Neptune and Pluto, had wrested the lordship of the universe from "solitary Saturn," they cast lots to determine how the three-fold world should be divided among them. To Jove (Zeus) fell the upper world; to Neptune, the sea; to Pluto, the lower world.

20. High and nether Jove—That is, Zeus and Pluto.

That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadorned bosom of the deep;
Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns
And wield their little tridents. But this Isle,
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blue-haired deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way
Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of those shady brows

24. Which—Refers to "sea-girt isles." "He" refers to Neptune.

24. Tributary gods—Lesser deities owing allegiance to him.

25. By course commits to several government—In turn divides among them for government, giving to each lesser god an island.

26. Sapphire crowns and wield their little tridents—Neptune was represented as wearing a sapphire crown and carrying a trident or three-pronged spear as a symbol of his lordship. See Winston's *Simplified Dictionary* for an illustration.

27. This Isle—England. Shakespeare calls England "This precious stone set in the silver sea."

29. Quarters to—Divides among.

30. Tract that fronts the falling sun—Wales, which is in the west. See *The Historical Background*.

31. Noble Peer—The Earl of Bridgewater.

31. Mickle—Much, great.

32. Tempered awe—The Welsh being an "old and haughty" nation were not to be governed arbitrarily. They would submit only to "tempered awe" —a government tempered by respect for their wishes.

33. An old and haughty nation, proud in arms—See *The Arthurian Legend* in *PROSE AND POETRY Eleventh Year*, pp. 150–151. Also note Burke's comment on Wales in the *Speech on Conciliation* in this volume.

34. His—The Earl of Bridgewater's. See *The Historical Background*.

35. Their father's state, and new-intrusted sceptre—That is, the ceremonies attendant upon his assumption of the presidency of Wales. See *The Historical Background*.

37. Perplexed—Mazy, hard to follow.

38. Nodding horror of those shady brows—What motion of the trees is here described? Is the description effective?

Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
I was despatched for their defence and guard!
And listen why; for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.
  Bacchus, the first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misused wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shores, as the winds listed,
On Circe's island fell. (Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charméd cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,

40. THEIR—Refers to "offspring."

41. SOVRAN—Sovereign, royal, highest.

44. WHAT NEVER YET WAS HEARD IN TALE OR SONG—In some few particulars Milton was indebted to other writers, but on the whole what he says in this line is true. The story as he tells it was new.

45. BARD—Singer, poet, minstrel.

45. HALL OR BOWER—The hall was the great room of the medieval manor or castle. See the description of the hall at Rotherwood in *Ivanhoe,* Chapter III. Here the minstrel entertained the household with his stories. The "bower" was the term by which the private apartments of the owner or his family was designated. See the description of Rowena's "bower" in *Ivanhoe,* Chapter VI, *PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year.*

46. BACCHUS—God of wine and revelry. "He represented not only the intoxicating power of wine but its social and benificent influences."—Gayley, *Classic Myths.*

47. MISUSED—Milton was distinguished for his temperance. See the biographical sketch of Milton.

48. TUSCAN MARINERS TRANSFORMED—The allusion is to the myth of the seizure of Bacchus by Tyrrhenian pirates, who, struck by his great beauty and believing that for that reason they might sell him into slavery for a good sum, set out to carry him to Egypt. Suddenly the ship stopped in mid-sea. "Ivy twined round the oars and clung to the sails, with heavy clusters of berries. A vine laden with grapes ran up the mast and along the sides of the vessel. The sound of flutes was heard, and the odor of fragrant wine spread all around. . . . The whole crew became dolphins and swam about the ship."—From Gayley's *Classic Myths.*

49. TYRRHENE SHORE—The coast of Italy bordering the Tyrrhene Sea, a name given to the waters between Sardinia and Italy.

49. AS THE WINDS LISTED—As the winds willed, that is, drifting with the wind.

50. ON CIRCE'S ISLAND—See the story of Circe, the Enchantress, in the *Odyssey, PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year,* pp. 445–451.

And downward fell into a grovelling swine?)
This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks,
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named:
Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered,
Excels his mother at her mighty art;
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were.
And they, so perfect in their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,

58. Comus—The parentage of Comus is Milton's invention. Comus, himself, is not found in the older classic mythology.

60. Celtic and Iberian fields—France and Spain.

65. Orient—Bright, brilliant.

66. Phœbus—The sun. The drouth of Phœbus means, of course, the thirst created by the day's warmth.

67. Most do taste—That is, most drink wine not to satisfy thirst but "through fond intemperate thirst."

67. Fond—Foolish.

68. Potion—The drink.

69. The express resemblance of the gods—An allusion to the Biblical account of the creation that "God created man in his *own* image." "Express" means exact.

69. Changed—Note that only the countenance is changed. It has been conjectured that the transformation might be more easily presented on the stage if only the heads or countenances of Comus's victims were changed.

71. Ounce—Leopard.

To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore, when any favored of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do. But first I must put off
These my sky-robes, spun out of Iris' woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

Comus *enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering. They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands*

Comus. The star that bids the shepherd fold
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day

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81. Convoy—Escort.

83. Iris' woof—Iris was goddess of the rainbow. "Woof" here means fabric or material. How probably was the Spirit garbed?

84. Swain—A countryman or shepherd. The Spirit impersonates the shepherd Thyrsis.

85. To the service of this house belongs—That is, in the service of the Earl of Bridgewater.

89. Office—Duty.

90. Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid Of this occasion—That is, Thyrsis, in the performance of his ordinary duties, is likely to be in these woods; hence the Spirit can assume his form without likelihood of raising suspicion as to his identity.

93. Star—The evening star.

93. Bids the shepherd fold—That gives notice of the approach of night and warns the shepherd to lead his sheep to the fold.

94. Top of heaven—That is, it is above the horizon.

95. Gilded car of day—The chariot of Phœbus-Apollo, the sun-god.

His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream:
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odors, dropping wine.
Rigor now is gone to bed;
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws, in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;

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96. Glowing axle doth allay—Phœbus-Apollo was believed to plunge his chariot and steeds into the ocean stream to refresh the latter and cool the axle of the chariot.

97. Steep—Deep. "Atlantic stream" alludes to the belief of the ancients that the world was surrounded by the River Ocean.

98. Slope—Declining.

110. Saws—Maxims, sayings embodying good advice.

112. Starry quire—The stars. It was the belief of the ancients that the "spheres" which encompassed the Earth were in motion and that their motion made a sweet music. It is to this which Shakespeare refers in the lines in *The Merchant of Venice*:

> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims:
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

116. Morrice—A rustic dance. The allusion is, of course, to the tides which are caused by the moon.

And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain-brim,
The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rites begin;
'Tis only daylight that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veiled Cotytto, to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns! mysterious dame,
That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air!
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou ridest with Hecat', and befriend
Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice Morn on the Indian steep,
From her cabined loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale Sun descry
Our concealed solemnity.
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round.

117. Tawny—Yellow.

121. Wakes—Merry-makings.

127. Dun—Dim.

129. Cotytto—A Thracian goddess worshiped at night with debauchery and licentious rites.

132. Spets—Spits.

135. Hecat'—Hecate, goddess of witchcraft. See *Macbeth,* Act IV, Scene 1.

139. Nice—Over-particular, fussy.

139. Morn—The allusion is to the myth that Apollo (the Sun) was preceded by Aurora (the Dawn).

139. Indian steep—On the high mountains of northern India, which lie to the east of England.

141. Descry—Point out, disclose.

143. Beat the ground—That is, dance.

The Measure

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright. Some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains: I shall ere long
Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells into the spongy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;
Which must not be, for that's against my course.
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust
I shall appear some harmless villager,
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,
And hearken, if I may her business hear.

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145. Break off—Stop dancing.
147. Shrouds—Shelters, hiding places.
147. Brakes—Fens.
151. Trains—Snares.
153. Thus I hurl—What action and "stage business" probably occurred here?
156. Give it false presentments—That is, deceive it (the "eye") with illusions.
157. Quaint habits—Strange garb.
159. Course—Plan.
161. Glozing—False, intended to deceive.
163. Wind me into—That is, insinuate myself into the favor of.
167. Keeps up—That is, keeps up at night.
167. Gear—Business, affairs.
168. Fairly—Quietly.

The Lady *enters*

Lady. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now. Methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds,
When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth
To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favor of these pines,
Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket-side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then when the gray-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labor of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest
They had engaged their wandering steps too far;
And envious darkness, ere they could return,

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171. My best guide—It being dark, she cannot see.
174. Loose unlettered hinds—Irrepressible, ignorant peasants.
175. Granges—Granaries.
176. Pan—God of nature and rural life.
177. Amiss—That is, they thank the wrong deities.
178. Swilled insolence—Insolence resulting from over-drinking.
179. Wassailers—Merry-makers, revelers.
189. Votarist—Pilgrim.
189. In palmer's weed—In the coarse garb of a palmer. A Palmer was the name given to a pilgrim who made the trip to the Holy Land.
190. Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain—The "gray-hooded Even" following Phœbus' wain, or chariot, is compared to a palmer following the "wheels of some rich man's chariot."

Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night,
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear;
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion, Conscience.
O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemished form of Chastity!
I see thee visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honor unassailed. . . .
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err: there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.

196. Felonious—Wicked.

197. Dark lantern thus close up—That is, shut up as the light may be shut up in a dark lantern.

203. Rife and perfect—Prevalent and distinct.

221. Sable—Black, dark.

224. Turn forth her silver lining on the night—What stage business occurs here?

I cannot hallo to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthe.
I'll venture; for my new-enlivened spirits
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

Song

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:

230. Echo—Echo was a beautiful mountain nymph, and a favorite of Diana. She was fond of talking, and whether in chat or argument would have the last word. One day Juno was seeking her husband, who was amusing himself among the nymphs. Echo by her talk contrived to detain the goddess until the nymphs made their escape. When Juno discovered it, she passed sentence upon Echo in these words: "You shall forfeit the use of that tongue with which you have cheated me, except for that one purpose you are so fond of—*reply*. You shall still have the last word, but no power to speak first." One day Echo saw Narcissus, a beautiful youth, hunting upon the mountains. She loved him, and longed to speak to him, but this she could not do. She followed him, however; and on one occasion when he had become separated from his companion, he called out "Who's here?" Echo replied with the last word, "Here." Then Narcissus called again, saying, "Let us join one another." Echo answered, and hastened to the spot, but Narcissus, when he saw her, exclaimed, "I would rather die than you should have me." "Have me," said Echo, but Narcissus fled from her. She went to hide her blushes in the recesses of the woods. From that time forth she lived in caves and among mountain cliffs. Her form faded with grief, till at last all her flesh shrank away. Her bones were changed into rocks, and there was nothing left but her voice. With that she is still ready to reply to any one who calls her, and keeps her old habit of having the last word. (This account is abridged from Bulfinch, *Age of Fable.)*

231. Airy shell—That is, invisible body.

232. Meander—A sluggish winding river in Asia Minor.

232. Margent—Edge, margin.

235. Her sad song—The allusion is to the myth of Philomela. Tereus, King of Daulis, married Procne, sister of Philomela. After the birth of a son, Itylus, Tereus tired of Procne and plucked out her tongue. He then married Philomela. Procne wove the story of her misfortune into a web and thus made it known to Philomela. In revenge, the sisters killed Itylus and served up the child as food to Tereus. As a punishment, Philomela was transformed into a nightingale forever lamenting the murdered Itylus, Procne was changed into a swallow and Tereus into a hawk forever pursuing the two sisters. Read Matthew Arnold's *Philomela* and Swinburne's *Itylus*.

Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere!
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies!

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,

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241. Parley—Speech.
241. Sphere—The Earth.
242. Translated—Transferred.
243. Give resounding grace—That is, echo to mortal ears.
243. Heaven's harmonies—The "music of the spheres."
244. Mortal mixture of earth's mould—That is, mortal, human being.
248. His—Its.
251. Fall—Cadence.
253. Sirens—See Homer's *Odyssey* in *PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year*, pp. 457–458.
254. Flowery-kirtled—That is, garbed in flowers.
254. Naiades (nā′yȧ dēz)—Water nymphs, especially those of fountains, rivers, and inland streams.
255. Potent—Having (magic) power.
256. Take the prisoned soul, And lap it in Elysium—Liberate the soul from the body and transport it to the abode of the blessed.
257–59. Scylla (sĭl′ȧ)—Charybdis (kȧ rĭb′dĭs). See Homer's *Odyssey* in *PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year*, pp. 459–461.

And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause.
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen.—Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.
Lady. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears.
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my severed company,
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.
Comus. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus?
Lady. Dim darkness and this leavy labyrinth.
Comus. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?
Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf.
Comus. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?
Lady. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.
Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?
Lady. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.
Comus. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.

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259. Fell—Fierce.

260. They—"Circe and the Sirens three."

268. Sylvan—Sylvanus.

271. Ill is lost that praise That is addressed to unattending ears—The Lady says, in effect, that she is not looking for a compliment.

273. Extreme shift—That is, a last resort.

277. Chance—Accident, mishap.

279. Near-ushering—Closely attending.

285. Forestalling—The word comes from *forestall*, a trade term meaning "to buy up in advance in order to control the market." "Forestalling" means fore-handed, done beforehand.

285. Prevented—Anticipated.

Lady. How easy my misfortune is to hit!
Comus. Imports their loss, beside the present need?
Lady. No less than if I should my brothers lose.
Comus. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?
Lady. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazored lips.
Comus. Two such I saw, what time the labored ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinked hedger at his supper sat.
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
Their port was more than human, as they stood
I took it for a faery vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colors of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-strook,
And, as I passed, I worshiped. If those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to Heaven
To help you find them.
Lady. Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
Comus. Due west it rises from this shrubbery point.
Lady. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practised feet.
Comus. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood,

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287. Imports their loss, beside the present need—That is, Does their loss mean anything to you more than the loss of their services to escort you through this mood?
291. What time—At the time when.
293. Swinked—Hard-worked.
293. Hedger—One who cares for hedges.
297. Port—Mien, bearing.
299. Creatures of the element—Spirits or demons of the air.
301. Plighted—Folded.
301. Awe-strook—Awe-struck.
312. Dingle—Wooded dell.

And every bosky bourn from side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighborhood;
And, if your stray attendance be yet lodged,
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.
Lady. Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended. In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportioned strength! Shepherd, lead on. . . .

The TWO BROTHERS *Enter*

Eld. Bro. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,

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313. BOSKY BOURN—Brook bordered or overhung with bushes.
315. ATTENDANCE—Those attending her—her brothers.
316. SHROUD—Hidden, sheltered.
317. LOW-ROOSTED LARK—The lark nests on the ground.
318. THATCHED PALLET—Bed of straws or twigs interwoven.
321. QUEST—Search or inquiry.
324. SMOKY RAFTERS—In Milton's time chimneys on peasants' cottages were not yet common. The fire was built against a "reredos," and the smoke went out through a hole in the roof.
325. COURTS OF PRINCES, WHERE IT FIRST WAS NAMED—*Courtesy* is derived from *court*.
327. WARRANTED—Safe. The meaning is: Since I cannot be in a place less safe, I should not fear to change my present state by accompanying you.
329. EYE ME—That is, watch over me.
332. WONT'ST—Is wont, is accustomed.
332. BENISON—Blessing.

And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levelled rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.
Sec. Bro. Or, if our eyes
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But, Oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her

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334. Disinherit Chaos—Dispossess Chaos. It was the belief of the ancient Greeks that before the creation of the world, matter existed in a "chaotic" state—without form. To the deity presiding over this great lightless void they gave the name Chaos, whom Milton in *Paradise Lost* associates with "old Night." To "disinherit," or dispossess, Chaos means to make light and drive out darkness.

335. Double night—That is, because it is not only night, but the woods are dark from the thick foliage.

336. Your—Refers to "moon."

338. Rush-candle—A candle having a rush for its wick.

339. Clay habitation—The peasant's cottage was generally made of wattles plastered with clay. The "wicker hole" would be an opening left unplastered.

341. Star of Arcady—Callisto, an Arcadian princess who incurred the enmity of Juno, was transformed into a bear. To save her from death at the hands of her son, Arcas, who was about to hurl his hunting spear at her, Jove transferred both to the heavens. Callisto became the constellation of the Great Bear, and Arcas, that of the Lesser Bear; or Cynosure. The Phœnicians (Tyrians, from *Tyre*) guided their ships by the pole-star which is in the Lesser Bear; while the Greeks steered by a star in the Great Bear—the "star of Arcady."

344. Cotes—Sheepfolds.

345. Pastoral reed with oaten stops—Pandean pipes. The pipes upon which Pan was wont to play were made of reeds or oat straws.

346. Lodge—The lodge of the forester, or keeper of the woods.

349. Innumerous—Innumerable.

From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement and affright,
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!
Eld. Bro. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all to-ruffled, and sometimes impaired.

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358. Heat—Passion:

359. Be not over-exquisite To cast the fashion of uncertain evils—That is, do not go to the extreme in predicting misfortunes which may not fall.

366. So to seek—So lacking.

368. Bosoms—Embosoms.

376. Seeks to—Has recourse to.

377. Contemplation—See *Il Penseroso*—"the Cherub Contemplation," lines 51–54.

379. In the various bustle of resort—That is, in "the busy hum of men."

380. To-ruffled—Exceedingly ruffled. "To" is an intensive.

He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.
Sec. Bro. 'Tis most true
That musing Meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his gray hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe; as bid me hope
Danger will wink on Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night or loneliness it recks me not;

382. Centre—The centre of the Earth.

383–85. But he . . . is his own dungeon—To the evil all things are evil. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton says:

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of Hell, a hell of Heaven.

386. Affects—Prefers.

387. Pensive—Contemplative, or conducive to meditation.

391. Maple dish—Wooden dishes were still in common use among the poor in Milton's time.

393. Hesperian tree—The famous dragon-guarded tree, bearing golden apples, in the garden of the Hesperides. To secure some of its fruit was one of the labors of Hercules.

397. Incontinence—Lust.

398. Unsunned—Because always hidden.

404. Of night or loneliness it recks me not—That is, it is not night and loneliness as such that I fear.

I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned sister.
Eld. Bro. I do not, brother,
Infer as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt or controversy;
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
That I incline to hope rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint suspicion.
My sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.
Sec. Bro. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?
Eld. Bro. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that is clad in complete steel,
And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
May trace huge forests, and unharbored heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagged with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblenched majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say no evil thing that walks by night,

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405. Dog—Accompany, attend.

407. Unowned—Chaste.

410. Where an equal poise of hope and fear Does arbitrate the event—That is, where there is as much to hope for as there is to fear.

413. Squint—What facial expression indicates suspicion?

422. Quivered nymph—That is, a nymph bearing a quiver.

423. Unharbored—Shelterless, barren.

In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,
No goblin or swart faery of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen forever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,

433. Moorish—From *moor*—a barren wasteland.

434. Blue meagre hag—That is, a witch.

434. Unlaid—One that refuses to stay buried.

435—Curfew time—Ghosts, elves, goblins, etc. might come out only between curfew and cock-crow.

436. Swart faery of the mine—That is, dark spirit of the earth.

438. Call Antiquity from the old schools of Greece—That is, call upon classic mythology and philosophy to prove the power of chastity.

441. Dian—Diana, patron goddess of chastity, always represented as carrying bow and quiver.

442. Silver-shafted—Diana was goddess of the moon.

443. Brinded—Brindled.

444. Pard—Leopard. In ancient art Diana was represented as winged and grasping two lions, or a lion and a leopard. She was also regarded as a guardian of animals, both wild and domestic.

445. Frivolous bolt of Cupid—Diana scorned love as a weakness, and bound all her nymphs to chastity.

447. Snaky-headed Gorgon shield—The allusion is to Medusa, one of the Gorgons. Whoever looked upon her, was turned to stone. Perseus cut off her head and presented it to Minerva, who fixed it in the center of her shield. See the story in Gayley's *Classic Myths*.

A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.

455. Lackey—Serve.

460. Begin—We should say begins.

460. Beam—A radiance.

461. Temple of the mind—The body. Paul the Apostle frequently expresses this thought, as in I *Corinthians* 6:19: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

463. Till all be made immortal—This is a Platonic idea. Edmund Spenser gives expression to it in his *Hymn in Honour of Beautie:*

> Thereof it comes that these fair souls, which have
> The most resemblance of that heavenly light,
> Frame to themselves most beautiful and brave
> Their fleshly bow'r, most fit for their delight
>
> . . . .
>
> For of the soul the body form doth take;
> For soul is form, and doth the body make.

468. Imbodies and imbrutes—Becomes material and brutish. This idea comes from the *Phaedo* of Plato: "But the soul which has been polluted, and is impure at the time of her departure, and is the companion and servant of the body always, and is in love with and fascinated by the body, until she is led to believe that the truth only exists in bodily form, which a man may touch and see and taste and use for the purposes of his lusts" cannot "depart pure and unalloyed." Such a soul "is engrossed by the corporeal, which the continual association and constant care of the body have made natural to her. . . . And this . . . may be conceived to be that heavy, weighty, earthly element of sight by which such a soul is depressed and dragged down again into the visible world . . . prowling about tombs and sepulchres, in the neighborhood of which, as they tell us, are seen certainly ghostly apparitions of souls which have not departed pure. . . ."

469. The divine property of her first being—Invisibility. The belief expressed in the *Phaedo* is that the pure soul is invisible.

Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.
Sec. Bro. How charming is divine Philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.
Eld. Bro. List! list! I hear
Some far-off hallo break the silent air.
Sec. Bro. Methought so too; what should it be?
Eld. Bro. For certain,
Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,
Or else some neighbor woodman, or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.
Sec. Bro. Heaven help my sister! Again, again, and near!
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.
Eld. Bro. I'll hallo.
If he be friendly, he comes well: if not,
Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us!

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471. Charnel—Burial.

476. Divine philosophy—Another allusion to the *Phaedo:* "The soul which is pure at departing draws after her no bodily taint, having never voluntarily had connection with the body, which she is ever avoiding, herself gathered into herself; for such abstraction has been the study of her life. And what does this mean but that she has been a true disciple of *philosophy,* and has practised how to die easily? And is not philosophy the practice of death?"

479. Where no crude surfeit reigns—That is, upon which it is not possible to become surfeited as upon material sweets.

481. Far-off hallo—The hallo of the Attendant Spirit, who enters attired as Thyrsis, the shepherd.

483. Night-foundered—That is, swallowed up in night.

487. Draw—Draw what?

488. Well—Opportunely; that is, his coming is fortunate.

489. Defence is a good cause—That is, that we must defend ourselves is sufficient justification for attacking him if he is not friendly.

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd, enters*

That hallo I should know. What are you? speak.
Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes else.
Spir. What voice is that? my young lord? speak again.
Sec. Bro. O brother, 'tis my father's Shepherd, sure.
Eld. Bro. Thyrsis! whose artful strains have oft delayed
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale.
How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How could'st thou find this dark sequestered nook?
Spir. O my loved master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?
Eld. Bro. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.
Spir. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.
Eld. Bro. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly shew.
Spir. I'll tell ye. 'Tis not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,

---

495. HUDDLING BROOK—That is, the brook whose waters are huddled or heaped up by the delay to hear the madrigal.

495. MADRIGAL—Song.

497. SWAIN—That is, shepherd, rustic.

499. PENT—Penned, folded.

505. DOWNS—Rolling pasture lands.

509. SADLY—Seriously.

513. VAIN—Empty, without foundation in truth.

515. SAGE POETS—The allusion is to Homer and Vergil, both of whom wrote of "dire Chimeras, etc."

Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire Chimeras and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.
  Within the navel of this hideous wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
Charactered in the face. This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers.

516. Storied—Told stories.

516. High immortal verse—An allusion to such works as the *Æneid* of Vergil and the *Odyssey* of Homer.

517. Dire—Dreadful.

517. Chimeras (kĭ mē′ rȧ)—Fire-breathing monsters such as Vergil saw at the approach to Hades.

517. Enchanted isles—Such as the island of Circe. See the *Odyssey* in *PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year*, pp. 445-451.

518. Rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell—An allusion to the entrance to Hades as described in the *Æneid*.

520. Navel—Centre.

521. Immured—Confined.

525. Baneful—Poisonous.

526. With many murmurs mixed—That is, prepared with incantations.

529. Unmoulding reason's mintage Charactered in the face—That is, removing all trace of reason from the facial expression of the drinker, leaving that expression blank like the surface of a coin from which the face has been "unmoulded"—worn or cut off.

531. Crofts—Fields.

532. Brow—Overlook.

532. Bottom glade—Dell, valley.

536—Obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers—Dark haunts in the depth of the woods. The term "bowers" is here used in its original sense—a place embowered, or surrounded by foliage or bows.

Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savory herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listened them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. But, oh! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honored Lady, your dear sister.

539. Unweeting—That is, unaware of the true nature of Comus.

547. To meditate my rural minstrelsy—That is, to play upon his pipes.

548. Ere a close—That is, before he came to the "close" of the piece.

549. Wonted—Accustomed.

550. Dissonance—Discord.

554. Litter—A couch with shafts, canopied and curtained, formerly used, especially in ancient Rome, as a conveyance. The litter was generally borne on the shoulders, but horse-borne litters were common in medieval times. The meaning of the lines is, of course, that the "sudden silence" gave opportunity for sleep.

560. Still—Always.

Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear;
And 'O poor hapless nightingale,' thought I,
'How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!'
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place
Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey;
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbor villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.

Sec. Bro. O night and shades,
How are ye joined with hell in triple knot
Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?

Eld. Bro. Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period
Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm:
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change

565. AMAZED—Bewildered.
585. PERIOD—Sentence.

Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on!
Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But for that damned magician, let him be girt
With all the griesly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.
Spir. Alas! good venturous youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
But here thy sword can do thee little stead.
Far other arms and other weapons must
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews.
Eld. Bro. Why, prithee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near
As to make this relation?
Spir. Care and utmost shifts
How to secure the Lady from surprisal
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled

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597. If this fail—That is, if this is not true.
602. Girt—Surrounded. 603. Griesly—Ghastly, grim.
604. Acheron—One of the rivers of Hades, here used to designate Hades, or Hell itself.
605. Harpies—Foul beings "with heads of maidens, bodies, wings, and claws of birds, and faces pale with hunger."—Gayley, *Classic Myths*.
605. Hydras—A dragon-like monster with a number of heads.
606. Ind—India. 607. Purchase—Booty, prey.
610. Emprise—Chivalrous spirit.
617. Utmost shifts—That is, "every means of which I could think."
619. A certain shepherd lad—Generally regarded as an allusion to Milton's friend Charles Diodati, a physician.
620. Of small regard to see to—That is, not of striking appearance.

In every virtuous plant and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing;
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he culled me out.
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;
And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.
He called it Hæmony, and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or ghastly Furies' apparition.

621. Virtuous—Having curative power.

626. Scrip—Bag.

627. Simples—Medicinal herbs.

634. And like esteemed—That is, un-esteemed.

635. Clouted shoon—Patched shoes. Here is another allegorical touch. The small unsightly root, so little known and esteemed in England when Milton wrote, is that purity of heart which "in another country" bears the bright golden flower of salvation. This was the point of view of the Puritans to whom the policy of Archbishop Laud seemed to emphasize formalism in religion to the neglect of spirituality.

636. Moly (mō'lĭ)—The magic herb which enabled Ulysses to defy all the spells of Circe.

637. Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave—See the *Odyssey* in *PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year,* page 447.

638. Hæmony (hē'mŏ nĭ)—From Hæmonia, an ancient name for Thessaly.

639. Sovran—Effectual.

640. Mildew blast—Blight.

640. Damp—A rotting fog.

641. Furies—Three in number, the attendants of Proserpina. "They punished with the frenzies of remorse the crimes of those who had escaped from or defied public justice." They were terrible to behold, for their heads were wreathed with serpents.

I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compelled.
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised,
Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood
And brandished blade rush on him: break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground;
But seize his wand. Though he and his curst crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or, like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke,
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.
Eld. Bro. Thyrsis, lead on apace; I'll follow thee;
And some good angel bear a shield before us!

The scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS *appears with his rabble, and the* LADY *set in an enchanted chair: to whom he offers his glass; which she puts by, and goes about to rise*

Comus. Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or as Daphne was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

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642. PURSED IT UP—Saved it—literally, put it in my purse.

642. LITTLE RECKONING MADE, TILL NOW THAT THIS EXTREMITY COMPELLED—That is, never considered its value until the present necessity arose.

646. LIME-TWIGS—Twigs smeared with a sticky substance called bird-lime—a common method of catching small birds in Milton's day.

649. NECROMANCER—Magician, worker of black art.

652. LUSCIOUS—Honeyed, cloying.

655. VULCAN—In Greek mythology, the god of fire. The allusion here is to Vulcan as the causer of volcanic eruption.

660. ALABASTER—A white stone used for statuary.

661. DAPHNE—An allusion to a Greek myth. Daphne, a nymph, fleeing from Apollo was changed into a laurel tree.

Lady. Fool, do not boast.
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good.
Comus. Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition

664. Corporal rind—Body.
665. Immanacled—Restrained.
672. Cordial—Cheering, heartening.
672. Julep—A sweetened drink. Note line 674 below.
673. Crystal bounds—That is, glass.
675. Nepenthes (nė pĕn′ thēz)—A drug or potion used to drown pain or sorrow.
675. Thone—After the fall of Troy, Helen and her husband, Menelaus, set out for Sparta but were driven by storms to Egypt. Here they were received by Thone, the King, whose wife, Polydamna gave Helen the magic potion *nepenthes*. This she administered to Menelaus, thus causing him to forget her infidelity.
682. Invert the covenants of her trust—That is, go contrary to the terms of the agreement.
685. Scorning . . . Refreshment after toil—Scorning the one condition of the agreement which may not be waived, namely, "the condition to which all mortal frailty is subject—refreshment after toil, ease after pain."

By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.
Lady. 'Twill not, false traitor!
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
These oughly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With vizored falsehood and base forgery?
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.
Comus. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the stoic fur,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odors, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,

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698. Vizored—Concealed, from visor or mask, worn to hide the face.
700. Liquorish—Tempting to the taste.
707. Budge—Pompous.
707. Fur—Fur was formerly used to trim academic gowns and hoods.
707. Doctors of the stoic fur—That is, those philosophers or teachers who hold with the stoics that the pleasures of the senses are ignoble and to be foregone.
708. Precepts—Rules, principles.
708. Cynic tub—The allusion is to the Cynic philosopher, Diogenes, who to show his scorn of material comforts, lived for a time in a tub.

But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutched the all-worshipped ore and precious gems,
To store her children with. If all the world
Should, in a fit of temperance, feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility:
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their lords;
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,

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719. Hutched—Stored, hoarded.

721. Pulse—Plain, coarse fare, particularly "pease" and beans. See *Daniel* 1:12: "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink."

722. Frieze—A coarse woolen cloth.

726. Penurious—Miserly, stingy.

726. Niggard—One who hoards his wealth, a stingy person.

727. And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons—An allusion to the fact that under the English common law illegitimate children cannot inherit the estate of the parent.

728. Who—Refers to Nature.

728. Quite—Wholly, completely.

728. Surcharged with her own weight, And strangled with her waste fertility—These lines are made clear by the illustrations in lines 729–34 below.

730. Winged air darked with plumes—That is, birds would become so numerous as to darken the heavens, were they not killed for man's enjoyment. In Milton's day, small birds were baked into pies.

732. The sea o'erfraught would swell—That is, the sea over-crowded with fish would rise and encroach upon the land.

And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavory in the enjoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languished head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home;
They had their name thence: coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet.
Lady. I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.

734. They below—The reference here is not to creatures of the sea, but to the denizens of the "world below," or of Hell. The "deep" designates not the sea but the depths of the earth, where diamonds are found.

737. Coy—Disdainful.

737. Cozened—Deceived.

749. They had their name thence—The word "homely" being derived from home.

750. Grain—Color.

750. Ply—Work. The sampler was regarded in the day of our grandmothers as a kind of demonstration of a young lady's ability with a needle.

751. Tease—Card, comb. Wool was formerly carded by hand with a stiff wire brush or comb to separate and straighten the fibres for spinning.

756. I had not thought—Lines 756-61 are spoken as an *Aside*. The reply to Comus begins: "Impostor, do not . . ."

759. Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb—That is, make the worse appear the better reason.

I hate when vice can bolt her arguments
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance. She, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well-dispensed
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumbered with her store;
And then the Giver would be better thanked,
His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enow? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity
Fain would I something say;—yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery
That must be uttered to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,

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760. Bolt—Sift, as flour; hence, to refine.

760. Her—Refers to vice.

763. Would—Would that, desired.

782. Sun-clad—The wicked cannot look upon it.

788. Thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know—That is, thou art not deserving to know.

790. Dear wit—That is, superior wisdom. The expression is ironical; Comus talks as if he "knew it all."

That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
Yet, should I try, the uncontrolled worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.
Comus. She fables not. I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power;
And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly.—Come, no more!
This is mere moral babble, and direct
Against the canon laws of our foundation.
I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees
And settlings of a melancholy blood.
But this will cure all straight; one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste . . .

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791. FENCE—Sword-play, art of fencing; hence, cleverness.

800. SHE FABLES NOT—That is, she speaks truth, not fiction. Lines 800–806 are an *Aside.*

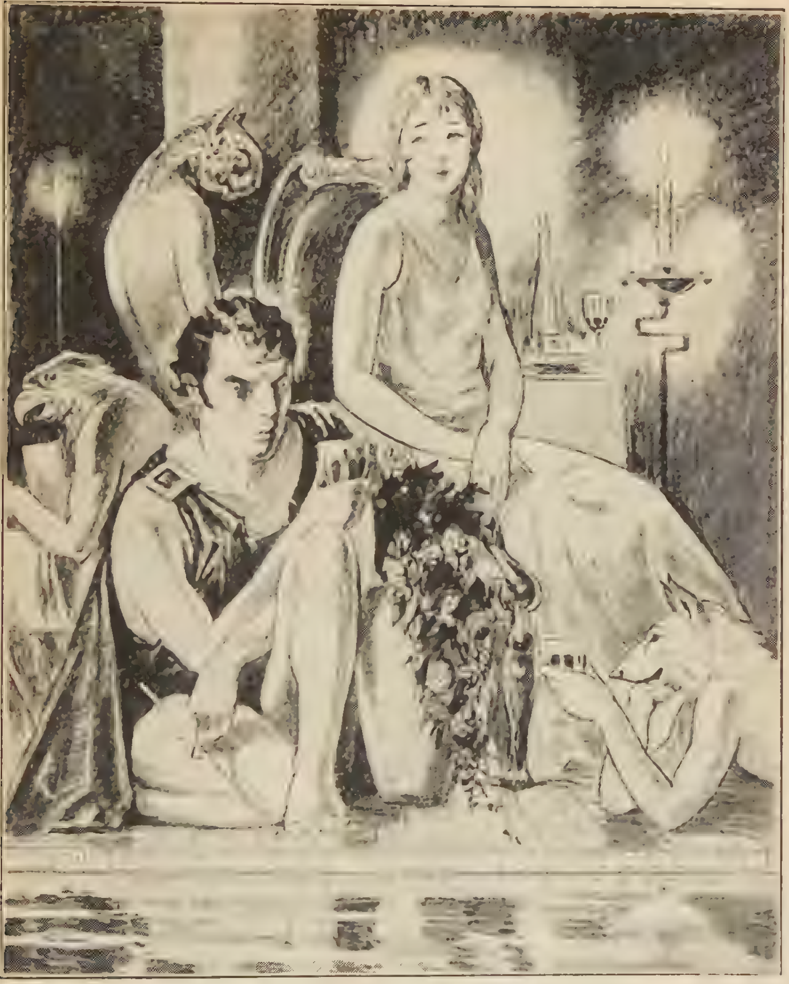
802. THOUGH NOT MORTAL—That is, though I am not mortal.

804. SPEAKS THUNDER—The thunderbolt was the weapon of Jove.

804. CHAINS OF EREBUS TO SOME OF SATURN'S CREW—In the war between Saturn and Jove, the Titans fought on the side of Saturn, and were punished by being hurled into Tartarus, the dungeon of Hades.

808. CANON LAWS OF OUR FOUNDATION—That is, the fundamental laws of our being.

810. MELANCHOLY BLOOD—According to the anatomy of Milton's day, melancholy was one of the "humors" or "fluent" parts of the body. Robert Burton, a contemporary of Milton, in his *The Anatomy of Melancholy* describes *Melancholy* as "cold and dry, thick, black, and sour . . . a bridle to the other two hot humors, *blood* and *choler.*" Comus says in effect that the Lady's belief is but the result of a settling, or excess, of the melancholy humor.



Comus. She fables not. I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power;

Comus, lines 800–801

The BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *comes in*

Spir. What! have you let the false enchanter scape?
O ye mistook; ye should have snatched his wand,
And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay: be not disturbed; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains.
There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream:
Sabrina is her name: a virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,

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816. ROD REVERSED, AND BACKWARD MUTTERS OF DISSEVERING POWER—That is, to cut (dissever) or undo the spell the brothers should have reversed Comus's wand and forced him to say the spell backward.

822. MELIBŒUS—Milton here refers to Edmund Spenser who had told the story of Sabrina in the *Faerie Queene*.

823. SOOTHEST SHEPHERD—Truest poet.

826. SABRINA—According to a tradition current in the eleventh century, Britain took its name from Brutus, a grandson of Æneas who migrated from Italy to Britain. Brutus's son and successor was Locrine. Locrine divorced his wife Guendolen to marry the beautiful German princess, Estrildis, by whom he had a daughter, Sabrina. Guendolen raised an army, defeated her husband, seized Estrildis and Sabrina and caused them to be thrown into the Severn. In fact, according to the legend the river took its name, which in the ancient British was Sabren, from Sabrina. Sabrina was metamorphosed into a nymph by Nereus. Spenser, whom Milton refers to as old Melibœus, tells the story as follows:

"The fair Sabrina, almost dead with fear,
She there attackèd, far from all succóur:
The one she slew in that impatient stoure [fit],
But the sad virgin, innocent of all
Adown the rolling river she did pour,
Which of her name now Severn men do call:"

827. WHILOM—Formerly.

That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enraged stepdame, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood
That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs, that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;
Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectared lavers strewed with asphodel,
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs
That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
Which she with precious vialed liquors heals:
For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock

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828. Brute—Brutus, the mythical founder of Britain.

831. Commended her fair innocence to the flood—Milton would have it that Sabrina threw herself into the river.

832. His cross-flowing course—That is, his course which flowed across her way.

835. Nereus—A sea-god, father of the Nereids, or sea-nymphs.

838. Nectared lavers—Fragrant baths.

838. Asphodel—The flower which the ancients believed grew in the Elysian Fields. Milton implies that the effect of the bathing of Sabrina was to convey immortality.

840. Ambrosial—Immortal.

845. Urchin blasts—Blights caused by elves, or mischievous spirits who assumed the form of the urchin, or hedgehog.

846. Shrewd—Mischievous.

852. Old swain—Melibœus, another reference to Edmund Spenser. See Note 344 above.

The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard-besetting need. This will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

Song

Sabrina fair,
  Listen where thou are sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave
  In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
  Listen for dear honor's sake,
  Goddess of the silver lake,
    Listen and save!

Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus,
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestic pace;
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook;
By scaly Triton's winding shell,

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858. ADJURING—To adjure means to command or to entreat solemnly and earnestly, as if under oath. The "adjuring verse" follows the song. In it the Lady entreats Sabrina in the name of Oceanus and other deities of the waters.

859. *Song*—These songs set to the original music are available on Victor records.

868. OCEANUS—God of the ocean-stream as distinct from the seas.

869. NEPTUNE'S MACE—Neptune's trident. "Earth-shaking" refers probably to the pounding of the seas against the land.

870. TETHYS (tĕ′ thĭs)—Wife of Oceanus, and mother of the river-gods.

872. CARPATHIAN WIZARD'S HOOK—The allusion is to the lesser sea-deity. Proteus (prō′ tŭs). He dwelt in a cave in the island of Carpathos, and was shepherd of the sea-calves, hence he is referred to as carrying a shepherd's hook. Milton calls him a wizard, for he had prophetic powers.

873. TRITON—Son of Neptune and Amphitrite, was the trumpeter of the ocean. By a blast on his "wreathèd horn" or sea-shell he might raise or quiet the waves. The lower part of his body was that of a fish; hence "scaly."

And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell;
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet;
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.
Listen and save!

Sabrina *rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings*

By the rushy-fringéd bank,
Where grow the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,

874. Glaucus—A fisherman who was changed into a sea-god. Claucus possessed prophetic powers; hence, "soothsaying."

875. Leucothea—Wife of Athamas, who in a fit of madness slew one of his two sons. Leucothea leaped into the sea with the other son, and both were changed into sea-deities.

876. Her son—Melicertes. In Roman mythology, Melicertes under the name of Portumnus, was god of ports and shores; hence, the ruler of "the strands."

877. Thetis—One of the Nereids, mother of the hero Achilles, referred to in the *Iliad* as the "silver-footed."

878. Sirens—See Homer's *Odyssey* in *PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year.*

879. Parthenope (pär thĕn′ ȯ pē)—One of the Sirens, whose tomb was supposed to be in Naples.

880. Ligea (lī jē′ a)—One of the Sirens. Compare with the German myth of the Lorelei.

891. Osier—A species of willow.

894. Turkis—Turquois.

That in the channel strays.
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here!

Spir. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmed band
Of true virgin here distressed
Through the force and through the wile
Of unblessed enchanter vile.
Sabr. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help ensnared chastity.
Brightest Lady, look on me.
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:
Next this marble venomed seat,
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.
Now the spell hath lost his hold,
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

Sabrina *descends, and the* Lady *rises out of her seat.*

Spir. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises' line,

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914. Thrice—The number three was believed to possess magic properties. See the witches' incantation in *Macbeth*, Act I, Scene 3.

921. Amphitrite (ăm′ phĭ trī tē)—Wife of Neptune.

922. Locrine—See Note to line 826 above.

923. Anchises (ăn kī′ sēs)—Father of Æneas, and hence an ancestor of Brutus, founder of Britain.

May thy brimmed waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth or singed air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.
  Come, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste or needless sound
Till we come to holier ground.
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your Father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wished presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide
With jigs and rural dance resort.
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer.
Come, let us haste; the stars grow high,
But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

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933. Beryl—A precious stone. The emerald is a kind of beryl.
945. Covert—That is, the thick over-hanging wood.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the President's Castle: then come the Country Dancers; after them the ATTENDING SPIRIT, *with the* TWO BROTHERS *and the* LADY

Song

Spir. Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play
Till next sun-shine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother

Noble Lord and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own.
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard essays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

The dances ended, the SPIRIT *epiloguizes* †

Spir. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air,

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963. MERCURY—Messenger of the gods, embodiment of speed and grace.
964. DRYADES—Tree-nymphs.
972. ASSAYS—Trials.
† *Epiloguizes*—Speaks the epilogue.

All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crisped shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
Thither all their bounties bring.
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound,
In slumbers soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced

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982. Hesperus—Among the gifts received by Juno on her marriage with Jove was a tree which bore apples of gold. Juno caused the tree to be set in a garden far in the west, and entrusted its care to the Hesperides, whom Milton makes the daughters of Hesperus, the evening star.

986. Graces—See Note to line 12, in *L'Allegro*.

986. Hours—Goddesses who regulated the seasons, usually represented as attendant upon Venus.

991. Nard and cassia—Names of aromatic plants.

992. Iris—Goddess of the rainbow.

995. Purfled—Embroidered.

996. Drenches—Co-ordinate with "waters" above, predicate of Iris.

999. Adonis (ă dōn′ ĭs)—The shepherd youth beloved of Venus whom he repulsed. Adonis, while hunting, received his death wound from a wild boar.

1002. Assyrian queen—Venus, whom Milton here identifies with the Phœnician goddess, Astarte.

Holds his dear Psyche, sweet entranced
After her wandering labors long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride;
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
  But now my task is smoothly done:
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

1005. Psyche—A king's daughter, whose beauty aroused the jealousy of Venus herself. Venus directed her son Cupid to inspire in Psyche a love for some low, ignoble being. Cupid accidentally wounded himself with the arrow with which he had touched the side of Psyche, but before Venus would consent to the marriage of the two she laid upon Psyche many "wandering labors long." The legend has had a great influence upon art. The student may read it in full in Gayley's *Classic Myths*.

1021. Sphery chime—The music of the spheres.

JOHN MILTON

(1608–1674)

Eight years before the death of Shakespeare, who dominated the literature of the age of Elizabeth, John Milton, the outstanding poet of Puritan England was born above his father's shop at the sign of the Spread Eagle in Bread Street, London. His birthplace was in the midst of the "busy hum of men"—"almost beneath the bells of Bow church, within hearing of the roar of Cheapside, near the Mermaid tavern, the resort of Elizabethan wits, and not far from St. Paul's and the Tower." The throngs of knights and barons bold, the pomp and feast and revelry, with mask and antique pageantry which are among the delights of *L'Allegro* were still a colorful feature of London life in his boyhood. Milton's poetry, however, was not to be the product of that exuberant delight in life which animated the poets of the Elizabethan age. His inspiration was to be the most austere ideal of life which was the guiding star of Puritanism.

For Milton's genius there is no accounting, as there is none for any genius. It is possible, however, to trace in heredity, home-training, and education the forces which gave that genius its peculiar bent and made its possessor the outstanding representative of Puritanism in English literature and the most learned of the English poets.

Milton was the child of a Puritan home, and received there a careful, devout, and dutiful training. His father, who had become a Puritan while a student at Oxford and had been disinherited for doing so, was a man of independence of mind and conspicuous integrity. Milton seems to have owed much to him. He was a man of literary tastes and a musician and composer of considerable ability. By profession he was a scrivener, and an eminently successful one, but practical success had not put him out of sympathy with the ambition of his son for poetry.

Milton's formal education began at the age of eight when his father engaged as his tutor Thomas Young, a young Scotch clergyman whom Milton credits with having infused into him a taste for classic literature and poetry. At the age of twelve he went as a day scholar to the justly famous St. Paul's School, then under the headmastership of Dr. Alexander Gill who was conspicuous in a day when Latin and Greek dominated the curriculum for encouraging the study of English. At St. Paul's Milton developed the love of learning which characterized him to the end of life. Learning, he wrote, "I seized with such eagerness that from the twelfth year of my age I scarce ever went to bed before midnight."

In 1625, he entered Christ College, Cambridge, where he remained seven years. "I studied," he says, "the learning and arts wont to be taught, far from vice, and approved of good men, even till having taken what they call the master's degree, and that with praise." Few great poets, with the possible exception of Robert Browning, have ever had more abundant opportunity for following the lead of their desires.

In 1632 when he left Cambridge he retired to his father's country place at Horton in Buckinghamshire about 17 miles from London. Here he spent five years in study and reading. As *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* reflect the delightful surroundings at Horton so do they reveal in their "delights" and "pleasures" how Milton spent these years. It was not a life of idle ease. Milton had a "mind made and set on the accomplishment of greatest things." He read widely in the Latin, Greek, French, Italian and English, confident in his genius, feeling "an inward prompting which grows daily upon me, that by labour and intent study, which I take to be my portion in this life, joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to after times, as they should not willingly let die."

In 1638, Milton made a tour of Italy, spending some time at Florence, Genoa, Naples, Rome and Venice, making the acquaintance of Italian literary men and scholars, visiting places of interest, and collecting books and manuscripts. Upon hearing in 1639 that trouble had at length broken out between King and Parliament, he cut short his tour and returned to England. "I considered it dishonorable," he said, "to be enjoying myself at my ease in foreign lands while my countrymen were striking a blow for freedom."

Upon his return, Milton took up a house in London. For a time, he received into his house "the sons of some gentlemen that were his intimate friends" as pupils and interested himself in education on which he wrote a tract. Possibly his most important contribution to educational thought, however, is the oft quoted definition of education: "I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war."

About 1641, he was attracted into the controversy then raging over church reform. Now began a period of about twenty years during which he "lay aside his singing robes," "to leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts" and "embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes." In 1649 he became Latin Secretary to the Council of State. In addition to the performance of the duties which this office lay upon him, he wrote a number of tracts in defense of the policies of the Commonwealth. His eyesight, which it would seem had never been strong, was severely tasked by these undertakings, yet he felt that it was his duty to continue even in the face of the warning by his physician that blindness would result; and in 1652 he became totally blind.

After the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, he was obliged for some time to live in concealment. There now followed what from the standpoint of literature was the most important period in his life, during which he wrote the greatest epic in our language, *Paradise Lost,* which was published in 1667. Critics are generally agreed that this work is his masterpiece. The poem deals with the fall of man and the promise of his redemption, and was written for the purpose of justifying the ways of God toward man. In 1671, appeared two other poems, *Paradise Regained* and the dramatic piece *Samson Agonistes.*

The loss of Milton's sight caused him to change his habits of reading and study. He retired usually at nine, rising, especially in summer, at four or five, and began the day by having the Hebrew Scriptures read to him. "Then," according to Aubrey, "he contemplated. At seven his man came to him again, and then read to him and wrote till dinner." He then exercised for an hour, usually walking in his garden, played on his organ or bass-viol, and sometimes sang. After this he resumed his studies, being read to until about six when he would receive visitors and friends and talk until eight, at which time he had olives or something light for supper. After eating it was his custom to smoke a pipe of tobacco, drink a glass of water, and retire to bed.

It was his practice to compose his poetry while lying abed, or while walking in his garden. Sometimes, it is said, he would lie awake all night unable to make out a single line. He fancied that "his vein never flowed happily but from" the vernal to the autumnal equinox, and was never satisfied with what he wrote during the other half of the year.

Milton's personality can hardly be said to have been a congenial one. As he grew older, his natural austerity of manner, his scholarly pursuits, and his devotion to duty tended it would seem to confirm in him a kind of exacting disposition which at times made him a difficult person to get along with. His treatment of his daughters—a treatment resulting from his conception of woman as the subordinate of man—at last drove them from him in revolt. But whatever may be said on this point, the most vigorous exactions were those which he put upon himself. His life bears out the belief which he once expressed in middle age. "I was confirmed," he wrote, "in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrated of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem—not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and practice of all that is praiseworthy." And the "true poem" that was John Milton may be said to have come from the pen of Wordsworth who in his great sonnet has expressed the judgment of time:

> Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
> Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea,
> Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
> So didst thou travel on life's common way
> In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
> The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

THE INTERPRETATION OF *L'ALLEGRO* AND *IL PENSEROSO*

L'Allegro and *Il Penseroso* are companion poems. The titles are usually translated as meaning "the cheerful man" and "the serious, or thoughtful man." The poems do not, however, describe the day of two distinct individuals; rather they describe the alternating moods of one man, and that man in this case is Milton himself. Nor should it be supposed that all the pleasures which mark the day of the cheerful man, for example, were enjoyed in the one round of twenty-four hours. What Milton is doing is describing a kind of composite day into which he has compressed the pleasures which appealed to him.

The poems are in a large measure autobiographical. There is a great deal of Milton in them. They are not mere exercises in poetic fancy. They reveal not only Milton's tastes but the lofty plane upon which Milton's life was conceived and lived.

L'Allegro opens with a line bidding loathèd Melancholy be off. Melancholy in Milton's day was a term to which attached a wide signification. It seems certain that Milton does not use it here in the sense that he does in *Il Penseroso,* where it stands for a mood of calm and quiet favorable to contemplation and high thought. In *L'Allegro* the mood which Milton has in mind is perhaps more what we usually understand by melancholy—a gloomy depression born of failure to find unity or purpose in life. It is the kind of melancholy, which akin to insanity, might most appropriately be thought of as born of "Cerberus and blackest Midnight"—a mood proper only to those who dwell in the Cimmerian darkness of hopelessness.

The invocation to Mirth delineates a "Goddess fair and free"—the patroness of "unreprovèd pleasures free," the innocent pleasures which do not enslave the spirit and mind of man and make appetite the master. One can see here the germ of that idea later developed in *Comus:*

> . . . When lust
> By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk
> But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
> Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
> The soul grows clotted by contagion,
> Imbodies and imbrutes, till she quite lose
> The divine property of her first being.

It is noteworthy that Milton rejects the parentage of Mirth given by the ancient mythology. The Mirth which he invokes is not the pleasure which is born of Venus, goddess of love, and Bacchus, god of wine and revelry. It is an uncloying Mirth forever to be enjoyed, partaking of the freshness of the West Wind and the brightness of the Dawn. The characters who follow in the train of Mirth are not riotous bacchanals who by stimulation of the senses, by ceaseless activity, by "making whoopee" endeavor to put boredom out of mind; rather they are those things which give delight to all those who can recognize that reality is within ourselves, and that "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."

The specific pleasures described are those in which Milton himself delighted—the leisurely walk in the cool of the morning through the English countryside where there were sights and sounds to charm the ear and delight the eye; the upland hamlet, with its quaint customs and folklore, where old and young came forth to play on a sunshine holiday; the colorful pageantry of London and the Court; the comedies of Jonson and Shakespeare, and finally music married to immortal verse such as the meeting soul may pierce.

Il Penseroso begins by bidding "vain deluding Joys" depart. It is not mirth as such that Milton frowns upon, but specifically vain deluding joys, such as are the "brood of Folly"—the inane, fatuous delights which so conveniently serve as substitutes for thinking. The Melancholy which he invokes is the child of Vesta, goddess of the hearth, a deity averse to Venus and all her ways, and "solitary Saturn," for the things to which the mind turns in serious or thoughtful mood are best pursued in solitude "in some still removèd place where glowing embers through the room teach light to counterfeit a gloom." The companions of Melancholy are Peace and Quiet, Spare Fast, Leisure and Contemplation.

Like *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso* reflects Milton's own way of life. The particular things which appeal to the serious or thoughtful mood tell us in part how his years at Horton were spent—the evening walk and the hours by the hearth given to silent contemplation, the study and pondering of Plato and the classic philosophers, the reading of classic and English poets and dramatists, and the walk through the studious cloister's pale to hear the pealing organ blow.

The tastes which the poems reveal are those of the man of culture, wide education, and refinement, and of the scholar and man of leisure rather than of the doer and man of affairs. Yet the poems have their appeal to the man of affairs who has culture and refinement for they describe things in life to which he turns with genuine satisfaction when leisure permits.

L'Allegro and *Il Penseroso* are poems of the lyric type—which means that they are poems which give expression to personality—to mood and feeling, and aim to stir in the reader the feeling of the writer himself.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE READING AND STUDY OF *L'ALLEGRO* AND *IL PENSEROSO*

THE obvious purpose in reading *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* is appreciation, but full appreciation does not follow upon mere reading. One has to know what to look for. Poetry is something like music. It is possible to enjoy a symphony without knowing anything about the particular work or about symphonic music, but one's appreciation is likely to be heightened by knowing some what of these things.

What are some of the things in poetry for which one should look?

1. What is the poet trying to do? In every lyric poem the author is giving expression to some thought, idea, or impression. This thought or impression can be stated or described in literal terms, but the thought or impression itself does not constitute a poem. In *L'Allegro,* for example, Milton is giving us his idea of the ideal day of the cheerful man, or perhaps to put it less awkwardly, his idea of delights which appeal to one in cheerful mood.

2. The lyric poem is always a personal thing. The idea or impression is colored by the personality of the poet. It is *his* idea or impression, and it is always associated in the poet with feeling. In fact, the poet's purpose is not to give us a mere item of information about himself; he wishes to make us feel as he does. For example, take the lines from *Il Penseroso:*

> But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloister's pale,
> And love the high embowèd roof,
> With antique pillars massy-proof,
> And storied windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light.
> There let the pealing organ blow
> To the full-voiced quire below,
> In service high and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstasies,
> And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.

Milton is doing something more in these lines than simply telling us what appeals to him in serious or thoughtful mood. He tells us in such a way that the emotion he felt tends to be duplicated in us.

3. The chief means which the poet employs to secure this duplica-

tion of feeling in us is *imagery.* An image is a kind of sense experience which the poet through the power of language gives us. He can make us see, hear, feel, taste, and smell. We do not have the actual experience of hearing, for example, but so powerful is the appeal of words sometimes that the sense experience *seems real* to us. It seems to us that we do actually hear. An author who has this power to affect us has, we say, a powerful imagination. Images may be of different kinds. The commonest are those of *seeing* and *hearing.* Take, now, the lines from *Il Penseroso* given above. What images are made by such expressions as "high embowèd roof," "antique pillars massy-proof," "storied windows richly dight casting a dim religious light," "let the pealing organ blow"?

Whenever you have an actual sense experience, you always have some feeling about it. If you see a great picture, your seeing is accompanied by feeling. If you are familiar with Markham's *The Man with the Hoe* (See *PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year*), you have an illustration of what feeling Millet's great picture gave him. Whenever you walk through a great cathedral or hear a great organ, you always have some feeling as a result. *Images have this same power to create feeling.* Read the lines quoted above from *Il Penseroso.* What feeling do you experience from them? Does the *imagery* in the lines have power to move you?

The feelings which imagery arouses in the reader are of different kinds and of different intensity. There are all kinds of feelings or emotions. A cold shower may give us a feeling—a certain invigorating bodily sensation. But this is not an emotion of a high order or rank. Reverence, for example, is an emotion of a high rank. How would you rank the emotional effect created by the lines from *Il Penseroso?* Is it a high or a low emotion? Emotions may also be mild or intense. Passion is uncontrollable emotion—uncontrollable grief, anger, happiness, etc. How would you designate the intensity of the feeling raised in you by the lines from *Il Penseroso?* Is it mild, strong, or uncontrollable?

4. The vividness of imagery is often heightened by the movement of the verse. The poet Pope wrote, "The sound should seem an echo of the sense." No great poet has ever written monotonously regular verse. The meter of *L'Allegro,* for example, is iambic tetrameter, as follows:

Bŭt cóme thŏu góddĕss fáir ănd frée.

Milton, however, often substitutes for the *iambus* in a line some other foot of equal time value to make the sound seem an echo of the sense. Take the lines:

> Whíle thĕ coćk wĭth liv́elў dín
> Scátters̆ thĕ reár ŏf dárkness̆ thín.

Note the effect of changing the initial foot in the second line. It gives *force* and *vigor* to the sense.

Take the line:

> Haśte thĕe Nymṕh, ănd bríng wĭth thée

Here we have the two initial feet differing from the regular pattern. Is the effect one of vivacity and quickness, such as the sense demands?

Milton also employs another method of achieving variation. Read aloud the following lines:

> (1) Scatters the rear of darkness thin.
>
> (2) Swinging slow with sullen roar.

Does one line seem slower than the other? Examine the *quantity* of the vowel sounds to see which line has more full or long vowel sounds.

Milton employs other methods to secure variety in his verse. These two, however, are especially noticeable. Watching for them will serve to give you some appreciation of Milton's skill as a poet and also make it more clear to you that to get the most from poetry *you should read it aloud.*

I Begin by reading each poem through, or better yet listen while it is read aloud.

II Go over each poem more in detail.

1. Note the plan of each poem. Each falls into divisions as follows:
   L'Allegro: Lines 1–10, 10–24, 11–40, 41–68, 69–90, 91–116, 117–134, 135–150.
   Il Penseroso: Find the divisions.
2. Examine each division in light of what has been said above. By way of illustration, let us take lines 1–10 of *L'Allegro.*
   (a) What is the idea or thought? What is Milton trying to say? Can it be expressed in literal terms? His idea is something like this: Melancholy, leave me. You are loathed; you are the mood which is born of hopelessness and gloom. There is no place for you among men. The proper place for you is that dark Cimmerian land where according to the ancients

wandered the spirits who might never hope to enter the Elysian Fields.

(b) What is Milton's feeling? Does he convince you that a mood of black despair is an unwholesome thing?

(c) How does he do this? The answer is, through imagery. Let us examine this imagery and the effect of it. Milton does not stop with a literal statement. He makes the reader feel that Melancholy is indeed loathèd, by the personification of Melancholy—a creature of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born. Instead of simply saying that melancholy is a loathed thing he brings home to us through the imagery employed the characteristics of that dark, hopeless, gloomy mood—born of the fearful beast Cerberus, who in ancient mythology guarded all escape from Hell, and blackest Midnight. How much more effective is Milton's way of putting it than the literal statement that melancholy is a dark, hopeless mood that those who are in the mood are as men in Hell without a ray of hope. Milton's way of putting it is effective because it appeals to the imagination. He states his thought imaginatively, as we say. We get his feeling toward melancholy, because we re-create the picture. His feeling, we say, is conveyed through imagery. One of the student's chief difficulties will be Milton's classical allusions. Obviously Milton's imagery will be lost, if Cerberus means nothing to him. Milton had read the classics until Cerberus, the Stygian cave, and the dark Cimmerian desert brought to his mind very real and clear images. His imagery can only become vivid to the reader in proportion as Milton's allusions are transformed by the reader into concrete images. It is therefore desirable that supplementary to the reading of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* there should be extended reading in classic mythology.

(d) Note striking pieces of imagery. (1) Classify each according to its appeal—is it a visual or auditory image, or one of another type? (2) Does the comparison seem the more you think of it to convince you of the truth of the idea behind it? For example, does the idea that melancholy is a mood whose characteristics are such as one might expect in the offspring of Cerberus and blackest Midnight strike you as a true description of the hopeless despair known as melancholy. (3) What is the feeling created by the image? Does the imagery make melancholy seem a loathed or an

attractive thing? Is the feeling created by the image mild or intense? Is the emotion of a high or low order?
   (e) Point out lines which appeal because of their music or the beauty of their imagery.
3. Consider the poem as a whole. Is it clear? Is the imagery sharp and vivid? Does it affect your feelings? Do you find that it has sharpened your own appreciation of the delights which Mirth can give? Or the pleasures which Melancholy in *Il Penseroso* can give? What opinion do you have of Milton as a poet?

COMUS—THE MASK

The mask, or masque, was a form of dramatic entertainment. Its outstanding features were spectacular scenic effects, elaborate costuming, musical numbers, dancing, and representation of supernatural beings, especially of the gods and goddesses of classic mythology. It was frequently the vehicle of courtly compliment—a feature resulting no doubt from its being a favorite form of entertainment at court and in the house of great nobles. Oftentimes, too, the mask carried a symbolical or allegorical meaning. Practically all these features are observable in Milton's *Comus*.

The mask reached a high development in England in the days of Elizabeth. It afforded abundant opportunity for the extravagant display in which that age delighted. It was, however, never popular in the sense in which the Shakespearean drama was popular. In the first place, only the cultivated classes whose education and tastes reflected the new culture of the Renaissance could find delight in the wealth of classic allusion and in the more subtle appeal and the more sophisticated art of the mask. And in the second place, the cost of producing a mask confined it for the most part to the Court and to the houses of the great nobles. It remained until the Puritan régime swept away all forms of dramatic entertainment an occasional thing, that is, a form of entertainment suitable only to times such as the inauguration of the great official for which *Comus* was written.

It might be said that the mask was a theatrical rather than a dramatic form, for its author was not bound in the development of his plot or characters by the law of the drama. The characters, as in the *Comus* of Milton, may be little more than puppets who make set speeches which are not theirs but the author's. Incidents may happen without any relation to the demands of character or the requirements of cause and effect, as the rescue of the Lady by the intervention of Sabrina. In fact, in the production of a successful mask the musician and stage carpenter and the costumer were fully as important as the poet, for upon them depended the accessory appeals to eye and to ear which supplied the place of the interest that such a play as *Macbeth* has power to raise. Moreover, the mask made little demand on the actor. If one compares, for example, the character interpretation required by the part of Lady Macbeth with what is sufficient to carry off the part of the Lady in *Comus,* he will need no further argument on this point. It was for this reason that the mask was especially adapted to amateur performance. It seems, however, to have been the practice to employ professional actors or performers for parts which might call for skill which the amateur members of the cast did not possess. It has been suggested that the part of Comus might have been taken by such a professional.

It will be noted that the writer of a mask enjoyed considerable liberty. He might write to suit the occasion and the talents of those who were to take part. Only one restriction was laid upon him. It was a convention that the mask should exhibit two elements—the mask and the antimask. The first developed the main theme, the second introduced a grotesque element which gave variety and contrast. In *Comus* the antimask is seen in the rout of Comus and in the dance of the shepherds or rustics.

COMUS—THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

THE occasion for the presentation of *Comus* was the inauguration of John Egerton, first Earl of Bridgewater, as Lord President of Wales and of the Marches. The office was an important one, the Lord President being a kind of governor-general and the representative of His Majesty. His induction into office was an occasion of state, calling for appropriate ceremony, display, and entertainment, and dictating the attendance of all men of rank and consequence in the realm. The nature of the occasion, therefore, gave point to Milton's use of the old British Sabrina myth in a mask which was to be witnessed by the representatives of "an old and haughty nation, proud in arms."

Comus was performed on Michaelmas night, September 29, 1634, in the great hall of Ludlow castle, the official residence of the Lord President. Tradition has it that Milton based *Comus* upon an actual happening, that the Egerton children on their way to Ludlow Castle from a visit to relatives in Herefordshire lost their way in a forest. But it is more than probable that the tradition derives from the mask itself. However that may be, the parts of the Lady and the two Brothers were taken by Lady Alice Egerton, the fourteen-year-old daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater and her two brothers, who were both younger than she. Sir Thomas, the elder of the two, into whose mouth Milton puts such a deal of "divine Philosophy" was but thirteen years of age.

The presentation must have been a brilliant and colorful spectacle. The stage was placed at one end of the great hall of the castle. Before it, and somewhat to one side, sat the Earl of Bridgewater and his Lady —the "Noble lord and lady bright" whom the Spirit addresses in his last song when he presents the children to their parents. The mask itself offered abundant opportunity to stage carpenter and producer to exhibit their skill in scenic effect, stage device, and costume. Some of the best talent of the day was employed in its production. The scenery and mechanical effects were, it is believed, the work of Inigo Jones, a prominent architect and the stage carpenter for a number of the most elaborate masks of the period. The music was written by Henry Lawes, a distinguished musician, who took the part of the Attendant Spirit and acted as director.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE READING AND STUDY OF *COMUS*

While *Comus* is in dramatic form, it is essentially a lyric poem in which Milton sets forth and defends the power of Virtue. Comus, the Lady, and her two Brothers are not characters in the dramatic sense. Comus is but a mouthpiece for the way of life which Milton abhorred. The younger Brother is a kind of doubting Thomas. They exist simply for the purpose of the debate. The Lady and the Elder Brother speak Milton's words and belief.

To what extent Milton intended in *Comus* to represent allegorically the "Cavalier" and the "Puritan" it is difficult to say. There are here and there touches which would seem to indicate that what tradition has come to think of as the "Cavalier" was in his mind, notably the allusion to Comus's *curls* in line 608, pomaded and carefully dressed curls being one of the personal adornments affected by the gallants of the days of King Charles.

It probably can be said with safety that the philosophy of Comus seemed to Milton to be identical with that of the typically cavalier element, as that of the Elder Brother was that of Puritanism. That contemporary conditions were in Milton's mind is also indicated by the little allegory of the Hæmony in lines 629–637, but these occasional allusions do not make the poem an allegory.

Comus is to be read primarily for its poetry, but attention to it as a mask will help the student in his approach.

Comus is divided into three scenes or settings:

I A Wild Wood

II A Stately Palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness; soft music, tables spread with all dainties.

III Ludlow town and the President's castle

1. Describe an appropriate setting for each scene. Keep in mind as you read, the stage business and acting called for. Read each speech for what it contributes to the development of the plot.

2. Read each speech for its poetry following the suggestions given after *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*.

3. Consider *Comus* as a whole. Does it have the distinctive features of a mask? Can you point these out? Are the lyrics good? What purpose does each serve? Find lines which express the central idea. What characteristics of good poetry does *Comus* illustrate?

APPRECIATION TESTS *

I EXERCISES IN MOVEMENT

BELOW you will find groups of two selections each—an (a) selection and a (b) selection. Compare the two for movement. How do they differ? Examine the meter accent, and vowels in each to see if you can discover the reason.

1. (a) But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In Heaven yclept Euphrosyne,

(b) Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure.

2. (a) Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity.

(b) And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet.

3. (a) While the cock with lively din
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,

(b) Over some wide-watered shore
Swinging slow with sullen roar.

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* Appreciation tests are original in the *PROSE AND POETRY* series and are copyrighted as such.

4. (a) These delights if thou canst give
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

(b) These pleasures, Melancholy, give
And I with thee will choose to live.

From your examination of these selections answer the following questions:

1. Does meter depend upon the number of syllables in a line?
2. Does meter depend upon the time-length of the foot?
3. Is the trochaic or iambic line the faster?
4. What things slow up a line?
5. What things make a line move rapidly?

II TESTS FOR IMAGERY—IMAGE-MAKING WORDS

Underline the image-making words in the following lines.

1. Till the dappled dawn doth rise.
2. Stoutly struts his dames before.
3. To the tanned haycock in the mead.
4. Dancing in the chequered shade.
5. On the dry smooth-shaven green.
6. Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
7. To archèd walks of twilight groves.
8. Casting a dim religious light.
9. His orient liquor in a crystal glass.
10. They left me when the gray-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.

III TESTS FOR IMAGERY—VARIETY

Classify the following images. To what sense *(sight, hearing, taste, smell, or feeling)* does each appeal? Do any appeal to more than one sense?

1. Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn,
From the side of some hoar hill
Through the high wood echoing shrill:

2. Robed in flames and amber light
The clouds in thousand liveries dight.

3. Russet lawns and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;

4. Oft on a plot of rising ground
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar.

5. Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom

6. Ending on the rustling leaves
With minute-drops from off the eaves.

7. There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below.

8. And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrup mixed.

9. Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave.

10. Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green.

IV TESTS FOR MOOD AND FEELING IN POETRY

Following each selection below are words designating a mood or feeling which one would have in reading the lines of the poem. Select in each case the words which designate the feeling or mood aroused by the imagery created in the reading of the lines.

1. Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound

To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,

Do the lines create a feeling of *quiet, cheerfulness, excitement,* or *hilarity?*

2. Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit;
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,

Do these lines give an impression of *sadness, weariness, gloom,* or *tranquility?*

3. And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;

Do these lines create a feeling of *mystery, melancholy, peace,* or *fear?*

4. But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.

Do these lines create a feeling of *solemnity, dread, melancholy,* or *mystery?*

5. They left me then when the gray-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.

Do these lines give an impression of *sadness, calm, fear,* or *hope?*

6. A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.

Do these lines convey a feeling of *tranquility, dread, hopefulness,* or *excitement?*

7. How sweetly did they float up on the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled!

Do these lines convey an impression of *dread, serenity, happiness,* or *cheer?*

8. Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.

Do these lines convey a feeling of *terror, despair, loathing,* or *solemnity?*

V MEMORY TESTS

Fill in the blank spaces in the following:

1. Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip —— —— ——:
—— ——, and fallows ——,
Where the nibbling —— —— ——;
Mountains on whose —— breast
The —— clouds do often ——;
Meadows ——, with —— ——;
Shallow ——, and rivers wide;
Towers and —— it sees
—— —— —— —— trees,
Where perhaps —— —— lies,
The cynosure —— —— ——.

2. Thee, chauntress, oft thy woods among
I woo, —— —— —— ——;
And, missing thee, —— —— ——
On the dry —— green,
To behold —— —— ——,
—— near —— —— ——,
Like one that hath been led astray
—— —— —— —— —— ——,
And oft, as if her head —— ——,
—— through —— —— ——.

3. Be not over-exquisite
To cast —— —— —— —— evils;
For, grant they be so, —— —— —— unknown,
What —— —— —— —— —— —— —— grief,
And run to meet —— —— —— —— avoid?

4. Virtue could see to do —— —— ——
By —— —— —— light, though sun —— ——
Were —— —— —— —— ——.

5 He that has —— within his own clear ——
May sit —— —— ——, and —— —— ——:
But —— —— —— —— —— soul and foul thoughts
—— —— under the —— sun;
—— is his own ——.

6. Virtue may be assailed, but never ——,
—— —— —— force, —— —— ——;
Yea, even that which —— —— —— harm
Shall —— —— —— —— —— —— ——.
But evil —— —— —— —— recoil,
And —— —— —— —— goodness, when at last,
—— —— —— and settled —— ——,
It shall be —— —— —— change
Self-fed and ——. If this fail,
—— —— —— is ——,
And earth's base —— —— ——.

A COLLECTION OF MODERN PLAYS

NEW YORK CAST
MOONSHINE
ROBT
BETT
PALA

SECTION II

MODERN PLAYS

THE PLAYS PAGE

A Light Comedy

CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES................*Ruth Giorloff* 89

A Serious Fantasy

THE PATCHWORK QUILT...............*Rachel Lyman Field* 109

A Farce

POST MORTEMS..........................*Charles Divine* 128

A Tragedy

TRIFLES ....*Susan Glaspell* 141

A Rhymed Fantasy

SQUARE PEGS..............................*Clifford Bax* 158

A Melodrama

MOONSHINE ....*Arthur Hopkins* 174

A Satire-Farce

THE MAN WHO MARRIED A DUMB WIFE......*Anatole France* 185

A Romantic Fantasy

ON THE SHELF......................*Christopher Morley* 217

A Melodrama

THE GRILL.......................*George Woodruff Johnston* 231

A Morality Play

THE BEGGAR AND THE KING............*Winthrop Parkhurst* 247

WHY READ PLAYS?

I For Education in the Use of Leisure.................. 259

II For Development of the Imagination................ 260

III For Broadening of the Sympathies.................. 260

IV For Unfolding of the Personality.................... 261

V For Training in Effective Coöperation................ 262

HOW TO STUDY THESE PLAYS

I The First Reading.............................. 262

II The Discussion in Class......................... 262

III The Dramatic Reading.......................... 263

IV The Public Performance......................... 265

THE ONE-ACT PLAY AS A LITERARY FORM.................. 266

COLLECTIONS OF ONE-ACT PLAYS.......................... 267

BOOKS ON PLAY PRODUCTION 268

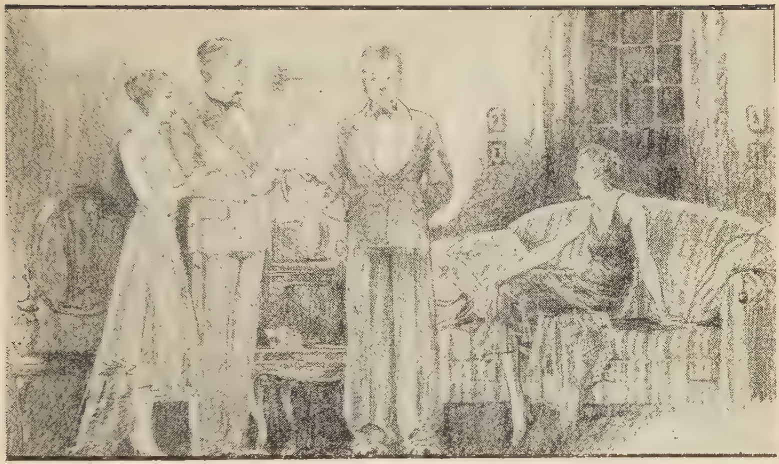
FOLLOWING EACH PLAY WILL BE FOUND

I A Story of the Author's Life

II A Word about the Play

III For Study and Discussion

IV For Further Reading



CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES *

A Light Comedy

Ruth Giorloff

CHARACTERS

Eve Hamilton, *a young widow, in evening dress.*

Don Hamilton, *her prep-school son, seventeen. School suit, then Tuxedo.*

Betty Everett, *sixteen. Afternoon dress, then evening gown.*

Stephen Everett, *Betty's father and Eve's fiancé. Tuxedo.*

Maggie, *Mrs. Hamilton's maid. Black dress, white apron, cuffs, collar, and cap.*

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SCENE: *The living room in* MRS. HAMILTON'S *apartment. A door right back; a door right leading to dining room; a door left leading to hallway. A long divan stands parallel but out a little from back wall, toward center. At right end of divan is a table holding books, magazines. A tall secretary desk, fitted with blotter, inkstand, paper, stands against right wall down front. A deep armchair down front left. Oriental rugs on floor, reading lamps, lighted, here and there. It is early evening and a soft glow is over the room from the lamplight.*

EVE *is discovered seated at desk, putting the finishing touches to a letter which she addresses, stamps and seals.* BETTY *is cuddled in the right corner of the divan, looking at a magazine, but now and then stealing an adoring glance in* EVE'S *direction.*

Eve. There now! I do believe I've told him everything! [*She holds up the letter and looks at* BETTY.] This is to your new brother, my dear.

Betty. [*With a half giggle.*] To Don?

Eve. Yes. [*She nods, smiling.*]

Betty. [*A bit whimsically.*] Well, I hope he'll like Father and me.

Eve. How can he help it?

Betty. [*With the doubt born of long experience.*] Oh, you can't tell a thing about boys. They're so queer. I wish I'd really met Don beforehand—so we wouldn't be such utter strangers. You know, I've been over to his school to lots of dances——

Eve. Of course you have. I'd forgotten your school wasn't far from Clinton.

Betty. We're only about twelve miles away.

Eve. Then you must have seen Don some time, Betty.

Betty. [*Thoughtfully.*] Just what does he look like?

Eve. Well, he's rather tall, and blond, with a bit of wave in his hair. [*This description varies to suit the boy who plays* DON.]

Betty. [*With conviction.*] And very nice-looking—of course.

Eve. [*Laughing.*] Oh, I don't know about that—I imagine he's merely "average."

Betty. [*Chuckling.*] Won't he be surprised when he finds out I'm going to be his sister? [*She rises and dances over to* EVE *who is still seated at desk.* BETTY *stands close to her.*] I'm so glad you said: "Yes, Stephen!" when Father asked you to marry him.

Eve. [*With a twinkle in her eyes.*] Are you *really,* Betty?

Betty. Really and truly. I'd have picked you out, you know, if Father had let me do the choosing.

Eve. [*Putting an arm about* BETTY'S *waist.*] You sweet child!

Betty. [*Sitting on the arm of* EVE'S *chair.*] Long ago, when Father talked about knowing you, I just hoped and hoped that some day you'd get sort of interested in him; because—well, he's fearfully nice, isn't he?

Eve. Yes, he is—fearfully nice.

Betty [*Taking* EVE'S *left hand in hers and looking at the ring on her fourth finger.*] Do you like your ring?

Eve. I adore it.

Betty. [*Rather soberly.*] You know—getting the right kind of a stepmother was an awful problem. I always used to think they were bound to be like the ones in fairy tales—perfectly horrid. You don't know what a load's been taken off my mind.

Maggie. [*Entering from left with a large florist's box in her arms.*] Somethin' for you, Mrs. Hamilton.

Betty. [*Skipping over to* MAGGIE *and taking the box from her.*] I know—flowers—from an admirer! [*She carries box to table at end of divan.*]

Eve. [*Rising, crossing to table, holding letter.*] Maggie, please drop this in the box—I want to be sure it goes out to-night. [MAGGIE *takes letter.*]

Maggie. [*Starting left.*] Yes, ma'am.

Eve. And Maggie—are you sure no letter came for me to-day?

Maggie. No, ma'am, nothin' come.

Eve. Very well. [MAGGIE *exits left.*] You know, Betty, I always hear from Don on Fridays. He's so very particular I'm almost afraid he may be ill. [*She unties box.*]

Betty. Oh my goodness! I hope he isn't sick. Just imagine how he'd feel then if he got a letter from his mother saying she was engaged to somebody he'd never even heard of. He'd probably turn right over on his back and die.

Eve. [*Laughing as she pictures* DON.] I doubt it. I think his rage would make him recover at once. [*She opens box and lifts out some long-stemmed roses.*] Oh, lovely!

Betty. [*Beaming with satisfaction.*] Do you like 'em?

Eve. My favorites! [*As she reads card accompanying roses.*] Some little bird must have said something. [MAGGIE *returns.*] Maggie, will you please bring a vase for these?

Maggie [*Going toward right.*] Yes, ma'am. [*At door right.*] And I'm to serve dinner for three?

Eve. Yes. Mr. Everett and Miss Betty will be here. [MAGGIE *exits right.*]

Betty. [*Glancing at her wrist watch.*] Then I suppose I'd better go and change, or Father'll be here before I'm ready.

Eve. I told Maggie to put your things out for you, dear.

Betty. [*From doorway left, coming back to* EVE.] Oh, it's so lovely to have someone like you think about me—it's a long time since I've had a mother. [EVE *puts an arm about* BETTY.] And I've enjoyed being here with you this afternoon, too.

Eve. Well—it's given us a chance to become better acquainted. I wish Don might have seen your father this way, too. It would make things so much easier. Don's a queer lad, with so many funny prejudices——

Betty. [*Wisely.*] *All* boys are funny! [*She goes toward door left.*] And if they ever found out how funny they were, they'd laugh themselves to death. [*Exits quickly left.*]

Maggie. [*Enters from right with vase.*] Will this be large enough to hold 'em, Mrs. Hamilton?

Eve. I think so. [*Arranging flowers in vase, her back toward door left.*] You know, Maggie, I think I'd better telephone over to school if I don't hear from Don in the last mail to-night.

Maggie. Oh, I do hope nothin's wrong with the lad. Mebbe he's ben studyin' too hard, an' ain't had a chance to write——

Eve. [*Smiling.*] Don—studying too hard? Maggie, I thought you knew him by this time——

Don. [*Tiptoeing in left, with a warning gesture for silence to* Maggie *who sees him over* Mrs. Hamilton's *shoulder, then standing still.*] Mother!

Eve. [*Turning.*] Don! [*He drops his suitcase and leaps toward her, his arms wide open.*] Why, you blessed old scalawag! So this is why you didn't write!

Don. [*Embracing her with a hug that almost cracks her ribs.*] Yes! Say, isn't it too tricky?

Eve. [*A bit anxiously, as she looks at his face.*] But what happened? It isn't a holiday? You're not ill?

Don. [*Chuckling.*] No! Do I look it? [*He thumps his chest.*] But somethin' busted in the heatin' plant at school [*He throws his hat and coat on divan.*] and it was so doggone cold, we all got sent home. [*He beams upon* Maggie *and crosses to her.*] Hallo, Maggie! Well, here I am—back again!

Maggie. [*With great affection in her voice.*] So I see Mister Don. Ain't that fine?

Don. [*Confidentially, as he leans a sharp elbow on her left shoulder.*] Say—how about the eats? Got plenty?

Maggie. Oh, I guess so.

Don. I'm a starvin' man, Maggie; the grub at school is simply disgustin'—nothin' but horse meat an' sewer trout——

Eve. Don! What a dreadful thing to say!

Don. On the level, Maggie. [*He looks at her pathetically.*]

Maggie. Oh, my! That's *awful*, Mister Don. Never mind, I'll see ye get enough good things while ye're home, ye pore boy.

Don. [*Giving his mother a sly wink of satisfaction.*] You know me, Maggie— [*He stretches his vest out in front of him.*] made of elastic!

Maggie. [*As she exits right laughing.*] I guess I do and so does the cook!

Eve. [*Putting her hands on his shoulders.*] Oh, Don, it *is* good to have you home like this—it's a lovely surprise.

Don. [*Taking her right arm in his and squeezing it affec-

tionately.] Say, Mother, how many shows can we take in?

Eve. When must you be back at school?

Don. [*Reproachfully, as he drops her arm.*] Oh—why be so practical? Gosh! I've just got here and you want to know when I'm goin' back! Gee! [*He goes to divan and sinks down at left end.*] If that isn't hospitality for you!

Eve. But I was just wondering, dear—so I could arrange things. [*She stands right looking over at him.*]

Don. [*With a deep sigh.*] Well, if you must know—we got to be back by suppertime Sunday. The Dean said he expected us fellows to do all our studying at home, too—only he didn't sound awful hopeful. [*He grins at his mother.*]

Eve. [*Crossing to stand at right end of divan, looking down on him.*] I see. Then I suppose you'll want to spend most of your time alone with your books? [*She smiles slyly.*]

Don. [*Leaning toward her, grabbing her left hand and pulling her down on divan beside him.*] Now, Mother! [*They laugh together.*] But don't you worry! I'm quick at pickin' things up. I need a rest, anyhow. All I been doin' is study. [*He sighs again.*] I don't know what the Dean is thinkin' of. We're nothin' but a lot o' persecuted Christians. [*Suddenly he discovers the vase of flowers and peers at them through his hands held opera-glass-wise.*] Who sent you the swell cabbages?

Eve. [*A bit hurriedly.*] Oh—er—an—admirer.

Don. Do I know him?

Eve. Er—no.

Don. [*Lazily as he leans back again among the cushions.*] Well, he needn't try to do any admirin' in person while I'm home. I want you all to myself.

Eve. Why, Don! You selfish boy!

Don. But when I nearly busted my neck gettin' here tonight, I certainly can't have anybody interferin' with my plans.

Eve. Oh, indeed? But suppose I happened to have some plans of my own?

Don. [*Easily.*] You can change 'em. You don't often have me home like this, Mother. You ought to show more appreciation.

Eve. [*Laughing as she pats his right hand with her left affectionately.*] Don, won't you ever grow up?

Don. [*As he holds her hand in his for a moment, and then becomes conscious that she is wearing a new ring on her left hand.*] What's this? [*He sits up straight rather abruptly and holds her hand before him.*] Gee, got a new ring? Gosh, it's tricky, isn't it? [*He polishes the stone violently.*] Where'd you get it—Woolworth's?

Eve. [*Slightly embarrassed.*] No—but—I got it.

Don. When?

Eve. Er—last night.

Don. [*Thinking hard, and then counting her fingers.*] One—two—three—four. Mother, that's your fourth finger—that means something! Oh, that's your engagement finger! [*He leaps to his feet and glares down at her.*]

Eve. Yes, dear.

Don. [*Horrified.*] Mother—you haven't gone and engaged yourself to somebody while I wasn't home to watch you?

Eve. I wrote you a long letter about it to-day, Don.

Don. A letter? What good does that do? Why didn't you tell me this was going to happen?

Eve. Because I didn't know it was myself.

Don. [*Tragically, as he stalks down right.*] And this is what I hurried home to—to find my only mother engaged!

Eve. I wish you wouldn't be quite so tragic about it, dear.

Don. [*Turning back toward her, and glaring at the inoffensive roses on the table.*] And I suppose those are from him! He's an admirer, is he? Just an admirer? [*He goes to the table and flips the roses with an indignant hand.*]

Eve. [*Coaxingly.*] Don, please come here. Come, sit down a moment and let me explain.

Don. No! No explanation will ever make things right. You—you certainly should have told me something about it.

Eve. [*Patiently.*] But how could I?

Don. Well— [*Gulping as he tries to control his emotions.*]—You—you certainly must have had some inkling of the creature's inclinations, didn't you?

Eve. [*Repressing a smile with difficulty.*] No, I really didn't. I thought we were just very good friends. It was a surprise to me, too, Don. I wrote you; but you see, you came home.

Don. [*Wandering right, then stopping.*] Yes, I came home. [*Dismally.*] And to what? [*He walks about, sunk in deep and devastating thought, then he comes back to her, where she still sits primly on the divan.*] Well, Mother, there's just this about it: I suppose I can stand your being engaged—as long as you don't let it go any further.

Eve. [*Innocently.*] Why, whatever do you mean?

Don. [*Firmly.*] I mean—it'll be O. K. with me as long as you don't marry him.

Eve. [*Apologetically.*] But I must marry him some day, dear. I believe it's customary when one is engaged.

Don. Now you see here, Mother—I've just got to let you know how I feel about it. I won't have a stepfather thrust on me this way. You've no right to pick one out an'—an'—just hand him to me, whether I want him or not.

Eve. [*Trying to stem the torrent of his words.*] Oh, Donny, will you please listen to me——

Don. [*Pacing back and forth from right to left.*] Oh, I wish I'd stayed in school and frozen to death or got pneumonia or something fatal. [*He decides to go to his room and starts toward right back.*]

Eve. [*In a mildly inquiring tone.*] Hadn't you better take your suitcase with you, dear? You'll want to dress for dinner. [*She walks left to where his suitcase stands.*]

Don. [*Outraged.*] Dress for dinner? After what's happened to me? Oh, how can you think of eating after what you've done, Mother? Oh, I wish I could get back to school to-night; only there isn't any train. [*He comes down and faces her across his suitcase.*] And do you know what else I wish?

Eve. [*With a twinkle.*] Sometimes it's a little difficult to tell.

Don. [*Rapidly and with great intensity.*] I wish I had a gun; then I'd shoot myself. But I haven't got one. I haven't got anything now—pneumonia, or a gun, or a mother— [*His voice rises in a wail of self-pity as he goes right.*]

Eve. [*Interrupting him.*] Don, do try and talk sensibly for just a moment or two, won't you, please? [*She follows him and makes him turn so he looks into her face.*] What is your objection to my marrying again? Am I too old?

Don. [*Indignantly.*] Old? No—you're too young! That's just the trouble. I can't see why you want to go and waste yourself on some old, squeaky-jointed geezer with whiskers.

Eve. [*Smiling.*] But he isn't quite like that, dear.

Don. You didn't hafta get married again. I'm man enough to be head o' the house. I was going to take care of you. And now—look at my future—what have you done to it?

Eve. [*Patting him consolingly on the back.*] I think your future is going to look much brighter after you've had a good dinner.

Don. [*Disgust overwhelms him.*] Dinner! Ugh! The mere mention of food makes me shudder. [*Accusingly.*] And I had a swell appetite when I got here, too. [*Goes right back.*] I don't think I'll ever want to eat again. [*He sees hat and coat on divan, returns for them. Puts hat on one ear, picks up coat, starts right again.*]

Eve. [*Watching him.*] Your bag, dear.

Don. [*Coming back for the suitcase.*] I can't understand you, always harping on trifles [*He picks up the offending suitcase.*] at a time like this. [*Goes right.*]

Eve. [*Quickly.*] Don, would it make you any happier to know that you'll have a lovely new sister——

Don. [*Dropping his suitcase with a crash, as he wheels and stares at* EVE *open-mouthed.*] A sister! ! ! ! O! ! ! !

Eve. But you've always wished you had one, and she's so pretty and sweet, dear——

Don. [*Gathering together the shattered remnants of his dignity he glares at his mother, taking one or two steps toward her.*] I've got no room in my life for any more women! You're the last! And from now on I shall have a terrible time even bein' civil to anythin' in skirts. [*He turns, stalks toward the door* *right back, picks up suitcase again, then stops abruptly and roars.*] Mother!

Eve. [*A bit startled.*] Good heavens, Don! Now what is it?

Don. Who is this man, anyway?

Eve. What man?

Don. [*Between clenched teeth.*] This—this admirer of yours—what's his name?

Eve. Oh—his name is Stephen Everett.

Don. [*Nodding.*] There, you see! [*He addresses his remarks to heaven.*] A perfect stranger with a perfectly vile name. [*He comes down to his mother.*] How do you know he's the right sort of man for you to marry? How do you know he hasn't seventeen other wives,—and—and flocks of children? [*He waves his overcoat in the air.*] How do you know he won't beat you? Oh, I tell you I won't have a lot of horrible step-relations—I tell you I won't——

Eve. [*Quietly, but in a tone* Don *dares not trifle with.*] Don, if you stand there much longer arguing, you'll be late for dinner. I'm expecting guests and I shan't wait for you.

Don. But— [*His lips move but no sound is heard. He has suddenly become speechless with wrath. He turns and exits rapidly right back, slamming the door after him.*]

Eve. [*Watching him go.*] Oh, dear! [*A bell rings off left.* Maggie *enters from right, goes off left to open door.* Eve *tidies books on table, straightens cushions on divan.*]

Stephen. [*Offstage.*] Good evening, Maggie.

Maggie. Good evening, sir.

Stephen. [*Entering from left, followed by* Maggie *who exits right.*] Hallo, Eve dear. Am I late?

Eve. [*Meeting him in center.*] No, of course you aren't. And thank you, Stephen, for the flowers. [*He kisses her.*]

Stephen. [*Watching her as she takes a blossom from its stem and comes back to him to pin it in the lapel of his coat.*] You know, Eve, I can't help thinking I'm a pretty lucky devil to get you. [*He takes her face between his hands and kisses her again.* Eve *sighs slightly.*] What's the matter—something worrying you?

Eve. No—I'm not really worrying, dear; but I've just had the most absurd scene with Don——

Stephen. Don? Why, I didn't know the boy was home.

Eve. He came to-night, unexpectedly—discovered your ring, and now alas, I find that I have blighted my son's future.

Stephen. Oh! Then I take it the boy's a bit upset, eh?

Eve. Yes, he's upset; but more than a bit.

Stephen. [*Laughing.*] Wasn't exactly overjoyed at the prospect of acquiring a charming new father and sweet young sister? [EVE *shakes her head.*] Hm! Has he seen Betty yet?

Eve. No. You both meet with his complete and unqualified disapproval. [*With mock seriousness, as her eyes twinkle.*] So—under the circumstances, I suppose there is nothing to do but break our engagement.

Stephen. [*Playing up to her and speaking in tragic tones.*] I see. And thus blight my future instead of Don's? [*He thinks the matter over for a second.*] No—no—I'm afraid I can't allow you to do that, Eve; because the boy's still young enough to weather the blight. But in my case, it would be absolutely fatal—I'm much too old.

Eve. Yes, that's just the trouble. You're much too old. Don can't understand why I want to waste myself on some old, squeaky-jointed geezer with whiskers.

Stephen. [*Convulsed with laughter.*] No—did Don say that really? [EVE *nods.*] Oh, by George! That's rich. [*He goes left still laughing.*]

Eve. I know. It does sound ridiculous; but he's awfully serious, Stephen. You see, Don's just at the age when he isn't quite a man, and at the same time he's not a boy, either. He's been the only masculine person here for so long that— [*She makes an apologetic gesture.*]

Stephen. [*Coming back to her.*] I know, dear. His attitude is to be expected, of course. It wouldn't be natural otherwise. It's probably equal parts jealousy and wounded feelings. I appreciate that it isn't easy for the lad. I'll try to square things with him. Trust me?

Eve. Of course.

Betty. [*Entering from left in a rush, wearing evening gown.*] I thought I heard Father's voice. Hallo, darling!

Stephen. [*Kissing her.*] Hallo, there, Bettykins! Well, how did you two girls get along together to-day?

Betty. [*At* STEPHEN'S *left,* EVE *at his right, while he has an arm about the waist of each.*] Marvellously! I think you're going to marry the nicest person in the world, Father.

Stephen. Well, we've one devoted constituent.

Maggie. [*Entering abruptly from right, much agitated.*] Oh, excuse me, Mrs. Hamilton, but can I speak to you one minute?

Eve. [*To* BETTY *and* STEPHEN.] Excuse me? [*Goes to* MAGGIE.] What is it?

Maggie. [*Wringing her hands.*] Oh, dear! Somethin's gone wrong with the electric stove—the cook's ben turnin' ivry wan o' thim buttons, but there's not a bit o' heat to be had.

Eve. [*Turning to* STEPHEN.] Stephen, are you acquainted with the eccentricities of electric stoves?

Stephen. [*With a conquering gesture.*] My dear lady, I can tame the wildest of 'em with one glance!

Eve. Then please come at once and tame this one or we shan't have dinner tonight. [*To* BETTY.] And Betty, you stay in here and cheer Don up, will you?

Betty. Don? [*Looking about the room.*] But where is he?

Eve. In his room, dressing. And he's in a frightful state of mind. Do be a lamb and calm him.

Betty. But what'll I say to him?

Eve. Anything at all—as long as you make him feel better. [*She exits right, followed by* MAGGIE.]

Betty. [*As* STEPHEN *starts to follow.*] Oh dear! But if he doesn't like me, what'll I do?

Stephen. [*Comfortingly, as he exits right.*] Then come out in the kitchen with the rest of us!

Betty. Oh, good gracious! [*She looks about, then snatches up a magazine, hurls herself into right corner of the divan and makes herself as inconspicuous as possible, holding up magazine before her face.*]

Don. [*Entering from right back, clad in his Tuxedo and a *very determined air. He puts his hands in his pockets, walks down front at right of divan without a glance at its occupant. Speaks with great decision.*] Mother, I've been thinkin' things over while I was dressin', and I've simply decided that this marriage business can't go on. If you've got to have a man in the house, I'll come home. I shall stop tryin' to get an education—it's a complete waste of time an' effort, anyhow; and I'll just take charge of things. [*He folds his arms across his chest and waits a moment for his ultimatum to penetrate his mother's consciousness.*] Well—what've you got to say to my proposition?

Betty. [*Trying in vain to stifle her giggles.*] Ooooh—dear!

Don. [*Wheeling about and discovering her peering at him over the top of her magazine.*] Oh! Wh—wh—what are you doin' here?

Betty. I'm visiting.

Don. [*With extreme dignity.*] And whom, may I ask?

Betty. Your mother. [*She looks him over appraisingly.*] Uhuh! I have seen you before. I have!

Don. [*Still frigid.*] And where, may I ask?

Betty. I've been to lots of the Clinton dances.

Don. [*Unbending a little as he regards her carefully.*] Hm! [*He goes closer to the divan and looks at her.*] Hm! You do look like somethin' I've seen before.

Betty. Oh? And what, may I ask? [*She holds her head in the air.*]

Don. Hey! Wait a minute! [*He goes closer to her.*] Wait a minute! I know you now. You're the pretty girl that bum Hunter wouldn't introduce me to over at school two months ago. [*He drops on divan beside her.*] Say, you remember me, don't you? [*Eagerly.*] Gee! What's your name?

Betty. Betty.

Don. Gosh! [*With great enthusiasm.*] Well, this is tricky! Say can I date you up for the next dance? I want to put it all over that big cheese, Hunter.

Betty. When'll the dance be?

Don. Oh, I dunno exactly—but I've got the next one—remember.

Betty. [*Slyly.*] But—when you were making that—er—speech over there [*She points right.*] I thought you said something about leaving school.

Don. [*Brought back to earth with a thud.*] Oh! Yes, that's right. I forgot. No, I guess I won't be at school, after all. I s'pose we'll have to call it off. I'm sorry.

Betty. [*Innocently.*] But why are you leaving?

Don. [*Glad to get the matter off his chest.*] Well, I'll tell you. Understand, I wouldn't tell this to everyone? [BETTY *nods.*] But my mother is plannin' to marry some feller because she's lonely, and I don't approve of it at all. She's awful headstrong—I can't seem to do a thing with her. She's a nice woman an' all that, you know, but determined. So there's just one solution. I've got to show her I can be head o' the house without her bringin' in some stranger. You can see that, can't you?

Betty. [*All sympathy.*] Oh, yes, indeed. I understand perfectly. Only I'm sorry it all had to happen before we could have that dance. [*She gazes at him wistfully.*]

Don. I am, too. [*He looks at her and then glances into space.*] It certainly is inconvenient.

Betty. [*Fluttering her eyelashes at him.*] Yes, isn't it? [*She sighs.*]

Don. [*Weakening as he looks at her again.*] I—I suppose maybe I might put off leavin' school till after this one dance——

Betty. [*Virtuously.*] Oh, but suppose your mother should get married in the meantime—then what'd you do?

Don. Gee, that's right. I hadn't thought o' that. Gosh, it wrecks the works, don't it? [*He rises, walks right, sunk in thought, then turns and goes back to her.*] Say, Betty, how'd you happen to meet my mother?

Betty. [*Hesitating a moment as she cudgels her brain for the right answer.*] Oh—er—er I met her through a friend—a mutual friend.

Don. I see. My mother's a real nice woman, isn't she?

Betty. Lovely.

Don. But a little tryin' at times. Oh, gee! I am sorry about that dance.

Betty. [*Looking as woebegone as she can.*] So am I, Mister Hamilton.

Don. [*Going back of divan, and leaning over beside her.*] Aw, don't be so doggone highhat; call me, "Don," woncha?

Betty. [*Demurely.*] Well, "Don," then.

Don. [*Leaning his chin on his left hand, as close to her head as possible.*] It sounds nice when you say it. You know, Betty, I been feelin' so depressed. [*She looks up at him, and fearing she does not approve of his closeness, he shifts his chin to his right hand, a little further away from her, still leaning on divan back.*] It's awful to think of havin' two step-things wished on you—a father and a sister.

Betty. Why—haven't you ever met either of them?

Don. No, I haven't. That's what makes me so mad. Here I've lived all these years, and I never even heard of 'em. Their name's Everett.

Betty. Everett? Everett—that name sounds awfully familiar to me, Don.

Don. Does it? Gosh! Maybe you might know 'em. The man's name is Stephen.

Betty. [*Very thoughtfully.*] Stephen. Hm! Stephen Everett.

Don. That's him! [*Eagerly.*] Oh, Betty, if you know him what's he like?

Betty. Well—I think he's very nice, Don. But of course, there's just the chance that I might be a little prejudiced——

Don. [*Decisively.*] Oh, no. I don't think you'd be. You got too much sense. If you like him, why that's something in his favor. He doesn't go in for whiskers or walk with a cane, does he?

Betty. [*Gurgling.*] No!

Don. [*Less enthusiastically.*] O. K. there, then. But what about the girl? I bet she's a big brute that'll want to boss me around all the time.

Betty. No, she isn't, Don. She's—well, she's sort of like me.

Don. Honestly? Oh, well, you see how I am. Too quick to jump at conclusions. Always been that way. It's a curse. Here these two people may be almost human after all. Say, do you know anything about the man personally?

Betty. How do you mean?

Don. I mean does he care anythin' for sports— [*He goes rapidly down the list with no pause for breath in between.*]—games—football, tennis, swimmin' meets, world series, you know—all that sort o' stuff?

Betty. Oh, yes, indeed. He's crazy about all those things, and so is his daughter.

Don. Really? Then I certainly got to get in touch with him soon. Oh, that's me, always lookin' on the dark side o' life. [*He turns back toward her.*] Say, maybe we'll have that dance yet. [*More soberly.*] But just the same, I wish you were goin' to be my sister, Betty.

Betty. Why?

Don. [*A bit embarrassed.*] Oh, I dunno—but—but we got so much in common, somehow. You understand me, and I'm not so sure about that other girl——

Eve. [*Entering from right.*] Oh, you're ready, Don. [*Goes to him.* BETTY *rises from divan.* DON *stands between* EVE *and* BETTY.] Betty, had you ever seen Don before?

Betty. Yes, I saw him a number of times over at Clinton.

Don. Oh, yes—we saw each other over there. Of course, we never did get to be formally introduced——

Eve. Then I'll see to it at once. Betty, dear, this is my son, Don. [DON *bows to* BETTY *with elaborate ceremony.* EVE *beckons off right to* STEPHEN, *who has been waiting in the doorway, unseen. He enters quickly.* EVE *stands between* DON *and* STEPHEN.] And Don, this is Stephen! [*She steps quickly aside right so that* DON *and* STEPHEN *may be together.*]

Don. [*Gulping with amazement as he looks at the handsome man who is to become his stepfather.*] Oh, my—how do you do, sir? [*They shake hands.*]

Stephen. Hello, old man. I've been looking forward to this moment for a long, long time.

Don. [*Rising grandly to the occasion and deciding he must introduce* Betty.] And, Mr. Everett—this young lady here—is Miss— [*He leans over, whispers loudly to* Betty.] Say, Betty, what's your last name?

Betty. [*Whispering back, and giving her father a glance.*] Everett.

Don. [*Utterly oblivious of the similarity in names, he continues the ceremony.*] Oh, yes, of course—Mr. Everett, this is Miss Everett.

Betty.
Stephen. [*Simultaneously, as* Betty *curtsies and* Stephen *bows.*] How do you do $\begin{cases}\text{Mr. Everett?}\\\text{Miss Everett?}\end{cases}$

Eve. You wouldn't listen, dear, when I tried to tell you.

Stephen. [*Laughing.*] Yes, Don, this is my daughter, Betty.

Don. Aw, Mother, you been holding out on me. Why didn't you tell me he was a regular feller, and that Betty belonged to him?

Eve. You wouldn't listen, dear, when I tried to tell you.

Don. Why—why—I should have met this man years ago! [*In his enthusiasm, he throws his right arm back to indicate* Stephen *and gives that gentleman a resounding thwack on the chest.*]

Stephen. I hope this sweet mother of yours hasn't upset you with her news about us?

Don. [*Speaking as though he had never known an uneasy moment.*] Oh, no. No, indeed! It was just a little surprise. Sort o' unexpected. But you got to be prepared for all sorts o' things nowadays.

[Stephen *and* Eve *exchange glances of understanding.*]

Stephen. Oh, by the way, Don, doesn't Clinton play her big game next week?

Don. Yes, sir! I'm left guard!

Stephen. Good stuff! We'll all come down to see it. How about it, folks?

Eve. Lovely, Stephen.

Betty. Oh, it'll be absolutely slick, Father.

Don. [*Rapturously.*] Then maybe I won't do some snappy playin'! [*He dashes at* Betty, *hugs her enthusiastically, waltzes her about in a breathless circle, then becomes suddenly conscience-stricken.*] Oh, excuse me! I didn't mean it—yes, I did, too. I don't need to apologize. It's all right. You're goin' to be my sister.

Maggie. [*In doorway right.*] Dinner's served, Mrs. Hamilton.

Don. [*Going to* Stephen, *grabbing his hand and working it up and down like a pump handle.*] I certainly got to congratulate you, sir. You know my mother's a remarkable woman, and she couldn't have pleased me better, if she'd asked me to pick you out. [*Leaves* Stephen *and goes to* Eve.] And Mother, well—all I can say to you is: You got a lot o' just plain horse-sense!

Eve. [*Trying hard not to smile at the compliment.*] Thank you, dear. I'm glad you're satisfied with everything. And now, hadn't we getter go in to dinner——

Stephen. [*Offering his arm to* Eve.] Better come along soon, children. [*They exit right.*]

Don. [*Rapidly.*] Why didn't you tip me off it was your father?

Betty. How'd I know whether you'd like him or not?

Don. [*Exasperated.*] My goodness! All I had to do was to look at you once to know what kind of a father you'd have. You'd certainly have saved me a terrible lot o' worry.

Betty. I'm just crazy about your mother, Don.

Don. Are you, Betty? I think she's the cat's whiskers, myself. Say, are you hungry?

Betty. Starved!

Don. So'm I. You know that's all I came home for, really. I wouldn't tell Mother. You always got to be so sentimental with a woman. But I simply have to stow away enough food to last till next time. [*He offers* Betty *his arm, his body bent at an absurd angle.*] Er—may I have the altogether suffocatin' pleasure, Miss Everett?

Betty. [*Placing her arm thro his elaborately.*] Mr. Hamilton—you slay me—really! [*Together they move right majestically.*]

Don. [*Stopping abruptly.*] Say—Betty——

Betty. What?

Don. When my mother marries your father, it won't turn you and me into blood relations, will it?

Betty. No! How could it?

Don. [*Chuckling happily.*] Oh, I was just thinkin' o' that big stiff, Bob Hunter, when he wouldn't introduce me to you. I've put it all over him now, haven't I? You see, you're gonna be my sister; yet you're not gonna be my real sister, an'—oh tricky! That's what it is—tricky! [*He takes a firm grip on her arm and all but drags her right.*] Whoopee! C'mon, Betty! Let's eat! [*Exit rapidly right.*]

Curtain

RUTH GIORLOFF

The Story of Her Life

"I THINK my *real* favorite is the play I always *intend* writing and never do," confesses Mrs. Giorloff, who adds, "but of those already written I prefer *Circumstances Alter Cases* as a comedy. My forthcoming work, a comedy—a long play—is already causing me sleepless nights and tragic moments. Deciding to write a comedy, and writing it are two different things."

No signs of mental anguish are apparent, however, in her plays, nor does the busy life which she leads leave much room for its indulgence. Her major interests, she reports, are "a small daughter, a husband, a house in the country, playwriting, and acting with the Irvine Players, a group of professional and semi-professional actors for whom I have written practically all my plays." She has also acted with the Theatre Guild and she frequently directs her own plays.

Mrs. Giorloff was born in New York City of north-of-Ireland and Pennsylvania Quaker stock. After attending elementary and secondary schools in New York City, she took special courses at Columbia University. She then studied dramatic art at Theodora Irvine's Studio for the Theatre, and, becoming interested in writing as well as acting, took courses in dramatic composition at Columbia. Her home is in Ramsay, New Jersey.

In addition to the accompanying play, Mrs. Giorloff has written: *Jazz and Minuet*, a little play of contrasts which is a great favorite with amateurs; *Nightshade; The Way Out; A Spring Frenzy; Maizie*, a tragedy; *Wanted: Originals Only; Counterfeit; Highness;* and others.

A WORD ABOUT THE PLAY

For the acting—or dramatic reading—of *Circumstances Alter Cases*, Mrs. Giorloff has the following suggestions: "Above all, each character must be natural. The least touch of artificiality ruins the effect. As it is a light comedy, it must be played at a good tempo, with a sparkle, gaiety, and quiet humor. Cues must be picked up quickly, and the stage directions followed to the letter, as they have been most carefully worked out, and thoroughly tested in many performances."

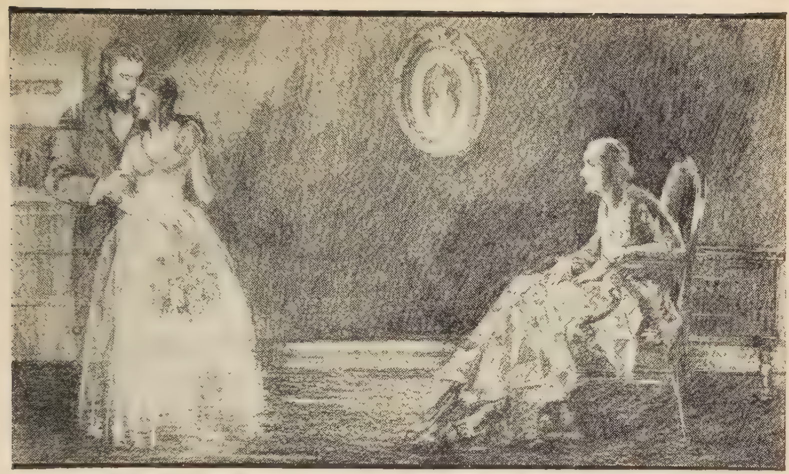
All of which will help to visualize the play as it is read. It will also interest readers to learn that this study of an eighteen-year old boy reacting to an unusual situation was made by the author from direct observation resulting from frequent visits to a preparatory school.

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Does the chief interest of the play lie in its characters or in the situations which have been contrived? Are the characters carefully drawn and presented? Which of them is most clearly outlined? Are the situations well contrived? Do the characters shape the situations, or vice versa? Is the dialogue natural and easy? How much does the setting have to do with the play? Could it be presented with little, or none, of the setting described?

FOR FURTHER READING

Jazz and Minuet	*Ruth Giorloff*
The Philosopher of Butterbiggens	*Harold Chaplin*
The Neighbors	*Zona Gale*
Followers	*Harold Brighouse*
Joint Owners in Spain	*Alice Brown*
A Sunny Morning	*Alvarez Quintero*
The Florist Shop	*Winifred Hawkbridge*
For Distinguished Service	*Florence Clay Knox*
Fourteen	*Alice Gerstenberg*



THE PATCHWORK QUILT*

A Serious Fantasy

RACHEL LYMAN FIELD

CHARACTERS

OLD MRS. WILLIS
ANNE WENDALL, *her daughter*
JOE WENDALL, *Anne's husband*
BETTY, *their daughter*

In the Fantasy

MOLLY
WILLIAM
EMILY

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* From *The Cross-Stitch Heart and Other Plays;* copyright, 1927, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers. All acting rights, both professional and amateur, are reserved by the owner. Application for the right of performing this play, or reading it in public, should be made to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

SCENE: *An upstairs bedroom and sitting room combined, of a modern city house, which has been "done over" recently. The mahogany furniture somehow fails to give the impression of antiquity that the decorator probably intended. We know at a glance that none of it has been much lived upon, and the conventional angles at which the chairs are arranged accentuate this feeling of newness. Several good prints, in subdued tones, hang on the walls, but the only picture which seems to be a personal belonging is a portrait in an oval gold frame over the fireplace. This is the likeness, in old fashioned pastel, of a little girl of six, round-eyed and serious, with the smooth ringlets and low necked dress of forty years ago. A coal fire burns in the grate. It is late afternoon.*

When the curtain rises old MRS. WILLIS *is wandering aimlessly about the room. She goes from one article of furniture to another, fingering each carefully and then moving on to another as if she were searching for something that should feel familiar to her fingers. She is a frail old lady in obviously new, and handsome black clothes, in which she seems tiny and out of place. Over her face there is a film of daze and bewilderment.*

She has reached the bed and is fingering a gray silk puff lying there, turning it over and over with obvious disappointment, when JOE WENDELL *and his wife,* ANNE, *enter. The former is in the forties, well dressed, with a stubborn chin and the keen, practical face of a business man. The woman is rather pretty in a nervous, twentieth-century sort of way. She wears a smart afternoon dress, and is removing her hat and gloves as she enters.*

Anne. [*To her husband, indicating* MRS. WILLIS.] There, Joe, you can see for yourself the state she's in! [*Going to the old lady.*] Oh, mother, do sit down, and don't keep fidgeting so! [*Old* MRS. WILLIS *looks at her in bewilderment. She makes no answer, and her daughter speaks again, more loudly this time,* *though with an effort at kindness.*] What are you looking for?

Mrs. Willis. [*Turning from one to the other blankly.*] I'm very sorry to disturb you, but I'm looking for my room. I seem to have lost the way.

Anne. [*To* JOE.] Just as I told you, this is one of her bad days! [*Speaking in loud simple tones as if to a child.*] Why, this is your room, mother, you've just forgotten again—

Mrs. Willis. [*Polite but firm.*] Oh, no, I wouldn't have forgotten my own room, not after so many years,—such a pretty one, too, with a table and six carved chairs. [*Proudly.*] They came from Boston—and a beautiful patchwork quilt.

Joe. [*With irritation.*] Can't you stop her, Anne, it's hopeless once she gets started on that old quilt?

Mrs. Willis. [*Nodding to herself.*] There's not another one like it anywhere's round. I always said the rainbow itself wasn't a mite prettier'n my patchwork quilt!

Anne. Oh, mother, you're all mixed up again—you're in your room at my house— [*Leading her over to a cheir.*] Now you sit down here by the fire, and try very hard to listen to what Joe and I ask you.

Mrs. Willis. [*Feeling of the chair.*] This chair isn't mine! It's got plain legs—mine had carved ones—

Joe. [*Helping* ANNE *out.*] What's the matter with these chairs? I think Anne's fixed you up a real pretty room.

Mrs. Willis. [*Blankly.*] Anne—Anne isn't here any more. [*She looks plaintively from one to the other.*] I can't just remember what happened, but she isn't here any more. Emily's all I've got now.

Anne. [*To Joe.*] You see, she doesn't even know me!

Joe. [*Shortly.*] Must be a real cheerful feeling!

Anne. Don't joke, I'm worried enough with this business about the farm.

Mrs. Willis. [*Repeating wistfully.*] Yes, Emily's all I've got now— [*She points to the picture over the mantle.*]

Anne. [*Turning again to her, and speaking wearily.*] Why, Mother, don't you remember that Emily's dead? [*Leaning over *her and speaking distinctly.*] She's been dead for over forty years.

Mrs. Willis. [*Trembling a little.*] Emily—dead? Why, she couldn't be. She comes to see me real often—she's the only one of my children that does now—

Anne. [*To* JOE.] You can see how she's failed the last month, Joe.

Joe. Yes, don't see how we'll get anything out of her in time.

Anne. [*To* JOE.] Just leave her to herself for a few minutes, it may bring her round.

[*They move away from the old lady who sits in the chair by the fire, staring straight before her, and occasionally feeling the chair legs hopefully, to sink back again disappointed at their plain surfaces.*]

Joe. [*Turning to* ANNE *with an air of finality.*] Look here, Anne, are you sure that deed isn't with her things somewhere?

Anne. [*Impatiently.*] Of course it isn't, Joe, you know I went through everything when we had the room done over.

Joe. Still, I always said you made a mistake clearing out all her junk wholesale like that. We might—

Anne. [*Interrupting.*] You know I couldn't have stood those old moth-eaten things another day! It wasn't as if the furniture had been really good either—that ghastly walnut and horsehair and a patchwork quilt with all the colors of the rainbow swearing at each other! [*On the defensive.*] And I didn't send everything away—there's Emily's picture—the decorator said it had nice coloring.

Joe. [*Worried.*] Well, I don't care what the fool decorator said, it's that deed I'm after, and we've got to find out where she keeps it.

Anne. But, Joe, they must have a record at Green River.

Joe. [*Pulling out an envelope.*] Heard this morning—seem's things got all mixed up there after the town hall burned down. A lot of the old books and records were lost, and it's going to take months to straighten out all the boundaries and claims.

It may not even have been registered. They thought, of course, that we had the deed to mother's place. In that case it would be easy enough.

Anne. Well, but didn't you explain it to Mr. Jenkins?

Joe. Of course I did! But you know what he is—says he'll take mother's place at our price, house, woodland and all if the title's clear and the sale can go right through.

Anne. But he'll give us a few days more surely?

Joe. Not Jenkins. He's made up his mind to start right in on the hotel plans—unless the ground's broken before frost sets in, all the building will have to wait till next year, and he says that rather than do that he'll take the Thompson place five miles north, though the view doesn't compare with ours.

Anne. [*Eagerly.*] We could let him start in work right away and get the deed later.

Joe. [*Flinging out his hands with an irritated gesture.*] But can't you see, Anne, legally we don't own that place! Of course everybody knows the farm belongs to your mother, but we can't prove it without that blamed piece of paper!

Anne. [*Earnestly.*] Oh, Joe, we've got to put that sale through somehow! Why, think what it would mean to us—

Joe. [*Gloomily.*] Do you suppose I've been thinking of anything else all week? If he takes the Thompson place everybody'll buy at that end of the town and our land will go way down in value.

Anne. We must find that deed! Think of all we could do with the money the place would bring. We could buy that stucco house in Wildwood Park that you said we couldn't afford, and go abroad for next summer and get a Cadillac instead of the Ford coupe.

Joe. Say, Anne, if you'd get her talking instead of spending money—maybe we won't ever get hold of—

Anne. All right, I'll try again— [*With a little sigh.*] and we could have a French governess for Betty just like the Lawrences' or maybe that new boarding school would be better—

Joe. Oh, Betty's all right. Funny, the way she and your mother seem to hit it off.

Anne. But, Joe, I don't think it's good for her to see anyone whose mind wanders so. [*Going toward* Mrs. Willis, *who is sitting just where they left her, staring before her in a subdued unhappy way.*] Now, mother, we want you to try and remember about the farm.

Mrs. Willis. [*Rousing for the first time at the last word.*] The farm—yes—you have to climb the hill to get there, right on top it is. There's lilacs by the door and you can look out over four counties from the front porch.

Joe. [*Encouraged.*] There, she does remember. [*To* Mrs. Willis.] Now about the deed, you must have had one. You know, a paper that says the farm belongs to you.

Mrs. Willis. [*Reminiscently.*] White laylocks, they are—

Anne. [*Urging.*] The deed, mother, try to remember where it is.

Mrs. Willis. [*Her face wrinkling with the effort to remember.*] I don't know—everything's got all tangled up in my head, like a ball o' yarn—

Joe. [*Speaking slowly and distinctly.*] Listen to me, mother —a little piece of paper with a red seal—that's what we want. And it says that the farm and woodland belong to you—you must have put it somewhere?

Mrs. Willis. [*Now hopelessly bewildered.*] Maybe if Emily would come she'd tell you what you want to know—but you said she's—she's— [*Her voice trails away plaintively.*]

Anne. [*Trying to draw her out.*] You told me once that father gave it to you on your wedding day—don't you remember?

Mrs. Willis. [*Feeling of the chair, and rising to go to the table.*] I want my carved chairs, and my table with the scratches on it. [*Smiling to herself at some remembrance of her own.*] Anne, she always would smuggle her kitten in to meals with her —that's how the scratches come to be there. I like to sit and feel them when I'm all alone.

Anne. [*Turning to* Joe.] It's no use when she gets all worked up like this.

Mrs. Willis. [*By the bed, her voice rising in agitation.*] It isn't here—someone's taken my quilt!

Joe. [*To* Anne.] Good Lord, she's started on that again! Well, I guess it isn't much use, and I've got to let Jenkins know by to-night.

Anne. She may quiet down if we leave her here awhile. Sometimes she acts quite like herself.

Joe. [*With a shrug.*] All right, I'll take another look through those papers we kept from her desk—might give me a clue.

Anne. [*To* Mrs. Willis.] Sit down again, mother. [*Helping her to the chair again.*] That's better, now you'll try and remember about the paper—folded up small with sealing wax on it. Joe and I'll come back soon.

Mrs. Willis. [*Wearily.*] I'll try—but if I could have my chairs and my quilt—

Anne. [*To* Joe *at the door.*] You fixed it all up with the lawyer so her signature won't be necessary?

Joe. Yes, she's not really responsible any more, and it's lucky in this case, for she'd never let the old place go, not the way she hangs on to things.

Anne. That sale simply must go through, Joe.

[*They go out, and* Mrs. Willis *stares after them wonderingly.*]

Mrs. Willis. [*Shaking her head.*] Those people wanted something—something they thought I had. [*Wistfully.*] I don't know what it's all about. [*She begins to whimper a little brokenly to herself.*] They're all gone, and I've looked everywhere for 'em—my carved chairs, and my patchwork quilt, and Emily's gone, too—

[*She cries softly in the slowly darkening room. Twilight is coming and save for the firelight the room seems stiff and cheerless. Suddenly the door bursts open and a merry little girl of six or seven bounds in, her arms filled with an old patchwork quilt whose folds trail after her. She runs towards the old lady eagerly.*]

Betty. Look what I found, Grandma!

[MRS. WILLIS *turns, rising with incredulous joy at sight of the quilt.*]

Mrs. Willis. [*Trembling a little.*] Then it isn't lost— Betty, you've brought Grandma's patchwork quilt back to her—

Betty. But it was on Katy, the cook's bed.

Mrs. Willis. [*Gathering the quilt in her arms, pressing its familiar folds close.*] My patchwork quilt—mine—mine—

Betty. It's got so many colors in it, not just one like the kind mother buys, [*Fingering it with interest.*] and it's pretty.

Mrs. Willis. [*Softly.*] It's beautiful.

Betty. [*Wonderingly.*] You're crying on it.

Mrs. Willis. [*In soft sure tones, the dazed look beginning to slip from her face.*] It's all coming back to me now.

Betty. [*Curiously.*] What's coming, Grandma? [*Bending over the quilt.*] I don't see anything.

[MRS. WILLIS *moves to the chair by the fire, sinking into it contentedly and spreading the gay maze of color over her knees. The firelight falls warmly on the little squares, as she fingers them with the eager greeting reserved only for old friends.*]

Mrs. Willis. There's that blue piece that came from mother's old winter cashmere—she always got it out come the first of November and wore it till March excepting her best black on Sundays and her second best for afternoons.

Betty. [*Bending over to see.*] Which one, Grandma?

Mrs. Willis. [*Finding another.*] And this is from my first party dress.

Betty. [*In surprise.*] Why, Grandma, did you go to parties, real ones?

Mrs. Willis. [*Nodding.*] Never missed one— A green silk this dress was, with a black sash and white tatting collar. William always liked me in green—

Betty. Who was William?

Mrs. Willis. [*Tenderly.*] William was your grandfather. [*Suddenly she goes on speaking with a kind of slow revelation.*] Why, every one of them is bringing me back something—a day, or the folks I knew and have been wanting— [*Lifting up her head triumphantly.*] Things are getting just as clear, nothing's mixed up any more now I've got back my quilt!

Betty. [*Who has been examining it.*] Here's a pretty square with pink flowers on it!

Mrs. Willis. [*Pleased.*] Well, I declare, if I hadn't clean forgotten that— 'T was a bit of ribbon great aunt Dolly brought me clear from Paris.

Betty. I've got a hat that came from Paris—it tickles my ears.

Mrs. Willis. I had a time piecin' that square to fit, but the ribbon's hardly frayed a mite.

Betty. And here's a little yellow one—what was that, Grandma?

Mrs. Willis. [*Touching it fondly.*] That was a piece from Emily's best dress.

Betty. [*Surprised.*] Aunt Emily in the picture up there? [*Pointing to it.*]

Mrs. Willis. Yes, she had it on in that picture only it didn't show as much as she hoped it would. [*Reminiscently.*] William bought that dress for her in Portland the day she was six— 't was all handmade and very dear. I scolded him for paying so much, but he could never do enough for Emily.

Betty. [*Studying the picture.*] And did Aunt Emily like it?

Mrs. Willis. She couldn't wait every afternoon till I'd get through my work, so I could dress her in it and curl her hair. Then she'd sit down in her little chair side of me while I did my sewing. [*Thoughtfully.*] Making this very quilt I was then. [*After a moment's pause she goes on as if she were seeing it all over again.*] Sometimes I'd baste on a square and let her sew it. She thought she was a real grown up lady then and she was just as proud—

Betty. [*Eagerly.*] Oh, I want to see the ones Aunt Emily sewed—which ones, Grandma?

Mrs. Willis. [*Thoughtfully.*] Let me see—about half way through I was, and her stitches were pretty big and crooked, but I never did have the heart to rip them out.

Betty. [*Excitedly.*] There! all round that big white piece in the middle—look they're just as wobbly, like mountains and valleys in my geography.

Mrs. Willis. [*With a little gasp.*] The white square in the middle, yes— [*Rubbing her forehead thoughtfully.*] There was something about it. It meant more than the others, that's why I let Emily sew it— [*Her voice trails off softly.*] Something about the white piece that made me happy.

[*She sits smoothing the white squares, when a voice outside calls, "Betty, Betty." The child rises and starts towards door.*]

Betty. I've got to go to supper now, Grandma, but I'll come back when you've remembered all about the white one—

Mrs. Willis. [*Repeating softly.*] The white one—

[*She bends over and kisses it as if it were alive. Suddenly from the dimness of the room a figure appears. As the firelight falls on it we see it is a lovely young girl, wearing a heavy white satin dress in the style of fifty years ago. Her face is flower-like, just what old* MRS. WILLIS'S *might have been at twenty. Over her hair is a draping of old lace. At sight of her* MRS. WILLIS *leans forward in her chair, speaking with soft wonder.*]

Mrs. Willis. My wedding dress—and why, why I couldn't have looked as pretty as all that!

[*The girl looks about her, then beckons eagerly to someone behind her, speaking in happy, excited tones:*]

Girl. It's all right, William, there's no one here.

[*Another figure steps out of the shadows, a straight boyish one this time, clad in the tight grey trousers, and neat black braid-trimmed coat of the period. His eyes are luminous with suppressed emotions, and his face pale. In his hands he carries a bouquet of white lilacs tied with a long shimmering ribbon. At sight of him old* MRS. WILLIS *gives a little cry, and holds out her arms to him, but neither he nor the girl is aware of her presence, being completely absorbed in each other.*]

William. [*Eagerly.*] Molly, I thought they'd never let me see you—

Molly. I know—sister said she never saw a bridegroom behave the way you do but I don't care, there never was one like you anyway, and I wanted to see you, too, before— [*Catching at his sleeve.*] I've been worrying so, thinking about all the things that might happen—how you might forget the flowers, or the ring might fall out of your pocket and you not know till the minister asked for it—and how could we ever be married then?

William. [*Touching his pocket.*] It's all safe, and I didn't forget the flowers— [*He holds out the lilacs, and she takes them with a little cry—burying her face in them.*]

Molly. Oh, William, I knew you'd remember about the lilacs—mother thought you'd bring lilies of the valley, but I knew better— And these came from the old Todd place, I know, because they're sweeter and whiter than any others. [*Shyly.*] Or maybe I just think so because it was up there that we—that you said—

William. [*Bending over her.*] What I'm saying now and every minute of the day—that I love you— I love you, Molly. [*There is a pause for a moment as she slips into his arms, then he goes on softly.*] I was up before light this morning, I couldn't sleep for knowing what day it was, so I went up the hill to the old Todd place to pick these before they opened too far. The bush was full of them all nodding away in the wind, and when I came up close a thrush flew right up out of it and began to sing, just as if it knew—

Molly. [*Softly.*] About us? I wouldn't wonder . . . that old lilac bush must have heard you last fall when you asked me. [*Touching the flowers fondly.*] Maybe these very flowers were listening—maybe they hoped they'd come to our wedding!

William. [*A little awkwardly.*] You look sort of like them today, Molly— I— I'm glad they let me see you first, before the others. You didn't mind?

Molly. I wanted you to, [*Smoothing her dress.*] and I'm glad you think it's pretty—wasn't it good of Aunt Dolly to give it to me? It isn't every bride has a satin that can stand alone!

William. [*Smiling at her.*] But I don't want it to stand alone. I want you to be in it!

Molly. [*Listening.*] There goes the knocker! Oh, William, they're beginning to come!

William. [*Earnestly.*] Molly, maybe you thought it was queer I didn't give you a ring to wear before now—

Molly. [*Simply.*] I didn't need to have a ring to know you loved me.

William. But I've brought you something, Molly, you can't wear it, but I wanted you to have it before we're married, something you're to keep for always.

[*He fumbles in his pocket and draws out a thin, folded paper with a seal.*]

Molly. [*Excitedly.*] Oh, William, what is it? It's too dark in here to read—what does it say?

William. It says that the old Todd place is going to have a new owner—it's going to be yours from now on.

Molly. Mine—mine—oh, William! [*She buries her head against his coat and he pats her hair tenderly, lifting up her face gently.*]

William. There, I've gone and mussed your hair, and your sister'll scold me for I promised her not to touch you.

Molly. [*Smiling up at him radiantly.*] Is it really mine—for always?

William. For always.

[*At this old* Mrs. Willis *cannot contain herself any longer, and she leans forward in her chair, speaking to him earnestly.*]

Mrs. Willis. And I've never let anyone else have it, William, I've always tried—

[*But neither of them hears the old lady.* Molly *takes the paper and kisses it, then she tucks it into the satin bodice of her dress, hiding it safely away out of sight.*]

Molly. [*Turning with a smile to* William.] There, I can wear it, William! All the time the minister is marrying us I'll feel it lying there, and it'll be just as if I were wearing the house and the lilac bushes and the view of the four counties—only no one will know except you and me!

William. We'll know, dear.

Molly. And I think I shall always keep it wrapped up in my wedding satin even when I'm too old to wear it any more.

William. [*Listening.*] I can hear them talking down stairs. It must be nearly time—

Molly. [*Suddenly clinging to him.*] Oh, William, hold me close, never mind if you do rumple me—I'm afraid.

William. Afraid, why, dear?

Molly. I don't know, I just am—sometimes—you know—it's all the things that may be going to happen to us and our house—

William. [*Gently correcting her.*] Your house, dear.

Molly. But I'll be growing old, dear, sometime. I woke up in the night thinking about it and I felt cold and afraid and you weren't there to tell me everything was all right.

William. [*Comfortingly.*] I'm here now, and everything is all right—we're going to be married. Come, they're calling you.

Molly. [*Touching the bodice of her dress.*] It's here, William—it's all safe and warm—

[*They fade into the gloom again, leaving old* Mrs. Willis *alone by the fire, the quilt still over her knees. She looks at the place where the two have stood with an expression of longing, and stretching out her arms, whispers.*]

Mrs. Willis. Oh, William, say it again—say everything's all right— I'm here all alone—

[*Then she bends over the quilt again fingering the square in the centre. The fire flares up a little and other figures approach her. This time it is an older* Molly, *a serene and beautiful young woman of twenty-seven, wearing a full dress of figured green material. Her face is more thoughtful and her hair is worn in a smooth forgotten fashion. She carries a great bag of sewing on her arm and leads along a tiny child—a little girl with round, serious eyes and smooth ringlets, exactly like the child in the portrait. Her quaint *low-necked dress is buttercup yellow and she wears it with childish satisfaction.*]

Mrs. Willis. [*Half rising from her chair and stretching out her arms with a low cry.*] Emily!

[*The two settle themselves near the fire.* EMILY *on a low footstool by her mother's chair.*]

Molly. Come dear, let's sit up close to the fire.

Emily. Does the fire like to see me in my yellow dress?

Molly. [*Smiling.*] Not as much as father does.

Emily. [*Chuckling.*] No, because the fire sticks out red tongues at me, and father doesn't—he always kisses me.

Molly. Then I must sew ever so many squares before he gets home so he will kiss me too!

[*She takes out some patchwork squares stitched together and begins to sew.* EMILY *watches her intently.*]

Emily. Why are your eyes all shiny, Mother, just like before a party?

Molly. [*Patting the square she is at work on.*] Because I've come to the centre of my quilt—see.

Emily. [*Touching it.*] What a funny big white square! Why isn't it pretty like the other ones?

Molly. I love it more than all the rest.

Emily. I like the colored ones better, why don't you?

Molly. Because— [*Smiling to herself*] it was a piece of the dress I wore when father and I were married?

Emily. [*Eagerly.*] Was I there?

Molly. [*Smiling at her tenderly.*] No, dear, I didn't know you then.

Emily. [*Wonderingly.*] Didn't you? I've always known you. [*After a pause.*] I wish I had been there. What makes you put the white patch in the middle?

Molly. Because the patch I love best must go there and— [*Smiling mysteriously.*] there's a secret about it.

Emily. Does father know the secret too?

Molly. Yes, and sometime I'll tell you— When you're grown up.

Emily. [*Disappointed.*] But that's a long way off.

Molly. [*With vague dread.*] A long, long way off, dear.

Emily. Let's call the white patch Best-of-all because it's got a secret.

Molly. Yes, we will, and we'll remember how precious it is—that's why no one must ever have the quilt except mother.

Emily. What does the secret look like?

Molly. [*Smiling.*] You see it every day whenever you run around the house or pick me lilacs in the spring, or look out over hills to the four counties.

Emily. [*In surprise.*] My, not all that in such a little square? [*She bends over it curiously.*]

Molly [*Happily.*] Yes, it's all there, but only father and I know—

Emily. And me—only I can't see any house or hills or anything—

Molly. [*Kissing her.*] Some day you will, darling, and you'll love it just as mother does.

Emily. I want to sew on the secret patch.

Molly. [*Hesitating.*] Well—perhaps— I was going to do it myself because we must be very careful—it's such a precious one.

Emily. I'll be just as careful and take the littlest stitches.

Molly. [*Putting it in her hands.*] There, in and out, where I've basted it, and be sure to pull the thread tight every time so there won't be a single loose stitch.

[EMILY *sets to work seriously and with a will. As her fingers touch the satin she hears something and puts her ear close to the square to listen.*]

Emily. Why—it crackles! Is that what makes it so precious, mother?

Molly. Yes, dear.

Emily. [*Seriously.*] Well, I think the white patch would like me to be wearing your gold thimble.

Molly. [*Slipping it from her finger to the child's with a smile.*] Here it is then, but be careful.

Emily. I will—and won't father be surprised to see me sewing just like a real grown up lady?

Molly. I think I hear him now stamping the snow off his boots at the back door. I'll go and tell him to come in and see who's making me a call!

[EMILY *chuckles joyously at this and sews very hard, while* MOLLY *rises and slips away. Old* MRS. WILLIS *leans forward, stretching out her arms to the child appealingly. Then* EMILY, *too, slips off into the gloom. At the same moment voices sound nearby, and presently the electric lights are turned on, revealing* ANNE *and* JOE. *The sudden light dazzles old* MRS. WILLIS *and she sits still with the quilt spread all about her, a mass of jumbled color.*]

Anne. [*With an exclamation of annoyance.*] Oh, that dreadful quilt! I thought I'd seen the last of it! Where in the world was that unearthed?

[*At this moment* BETTY *enters, running past her parents, and throwing herself eagerly on her Grandmother and the quilt.*]

Betty. Oh, Grandma. I've got just five minutes before I have to go to bed, and you said you'd tell me about the white square!

Mrs. Willis. [*Stroking it.*] It—it's very precious, and it's a secret—

Anne. [*Intervening.*] Betty, you must go right to your room. Don't ask Grandma a single question.

Betty. Just about the quilt, mother?

Anne. [*Touching it.*] No, and I'm sure I don't know where you found it.

Betty. [*Hurriedly.*] It was in Katy's room, but I want it on my bed. It's pretty and Grandma made it and there's one patch that came from Paris.

Anne. No, dear, you must take this right back to Katy's room. You have a nice pink one for your bed.

Mrs. Willis. [*Nervously rousing herself.*] You won't take my quilt away. I've been wanting it for a long time.

Betty. Just let Grandma tell me about this one, mother? [*Pointing to the white patch in the middle.*]

Joe. [*Firmly.*] No, Betty, take it away now. Mother and I want to talk to Grandma.

[ANNE *gathers it quickly out of old* MRS. WILLIS' *clinging fingers, piling it into the child's arms.*]

Mrs. Willis. [*Protesting weakly.*] It's my quilt, Anne, and I want it, won't you let me keep it? There isn't another one like it anywhere—

Anne. Why, mother, I couldn't think of such a thing, not after the cook's had it on her bed, and when you've got such a pretty gray one! Here, Betty, take it to Katy and then go to bed.

[BETTY *moves towards the door reluctantly, the quilt in her arms. Old* MRS. WILLIS *rises once, trying to make a last effort to rescue the quilt, and giving a last little despairing gasp of protest. But* ANNE *leads her firmly back to the chair by the fire.* BETTY *pauses by the door, fingering the white square. As she does so she gives a surprised start, putting her ear down close to it.*]

Betty. Why—it crackles!

[ANNE *waves her off, closing the door on child and quilt.* JOE *has already started on the old subject.*]

Joe. Have you been trying to remember, mother, about the deed of the old place?

Mrs. Willis. [*Plaintively.*] Every square was a piece out of the past to me, and you won't let me have it.

Anne. Now listen to Joe, mother, it's just one little thing we want.

Mrs. Willis. [*Looks from one to the other blankly. The film of daze has begun to spread over her face again, and she murmurs vaguely.*] The white square in the centre—I liked it the best —I don't remember why— [*Her voice trails off incoherently.*]

[*After a moment's uncertainty the old lady rises and resumes her occupation of roaming from one piece of furniture to another, feeling the chair legs and the table top.*]

Anne. [*To* JOE.] It's absolutely no use, Joe, not when she starts on that quilt.

Joe. [*Gloomily.*] Well, I guess we'll have that old place on our hands till we're a hundred!

[*The two go out and old* MRS. WILLIS *moves patiently about from one thing to another as she did at the beginning of the play. At last she reaches the bed, where she bends down to finger the gray silk puff.*]

Mrs. Willis. [*To herself.*] It's all gray now. [*She shakes her head a little wearily and stares straight before her*

As the Curtain Falls

RACHEL LYMAN FIELD

THE STORY OF HER LIFE

AFTER reading the play one would almost suspect Miss Field of a liking for patchwork quilts. This, she admits, is correct. And somehow that suggests a New England background for the author. Again the inference is correct, for Miss Field was born in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and attended schools there and in Springfield, Massachusetts.

From 1914–1918 she was at Radcliffe, where she took special courses in English, including the famous "47 Workshop" conducted by Professor Baker. Here her interest in writing for the theatre led to the production of her charming fantasy, *Three Pills in a Bottle.*

In addition to her plays, of which two collections have been published, she writes charming stories for children, some of which she has herself illustrated. She has also published verse, her latest volume being *Points East,* a book of narrative poems of the New England coast.

Her winters are spent in New York and her summers in New England.

A WORD ABOUT THE PLAY

The pathos of old age, living only in the memories which it cherishes; the hardness and selfishness of youth intent on its own purposes; the grace and freshness of an earlier day; and the sympathy and understanding of a little child—all these are included in this charming little play. Realism and fancy are interwoven in such skillful manner that we are hardly aware of the gap between them. The play is delightful to read, and, although difficult to produce, well repays the effort. Readers and audiences alike always respond to its varied appeal.

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Can you visualize the room in which the action takes place? Perhaps a diagram, a sketch, or—better yet—a model would help. Can you describe Mrs. Willis? "The woman is rather pretty in a nervous, twentieth-century sort of way." Can you elaborate this description? Why does Mrs. Willis talk so much about Emily and so little about Anne? Why does Mrs. Willis think so much of Betty? Are we to understand that Molly and William really appear, or are they merely Mrs. Willis's memories? How should their appearance be managed in a performance of the play? Should the same actress appear twice as Molly? Does Mrs. Willis remain by the fire while Molly and Emily are seated by it? Observe the way in which the hiding place of the deed is revealed to everyone—except those most interested in finding it. How does Mrs. Willis say the final line of the play?

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

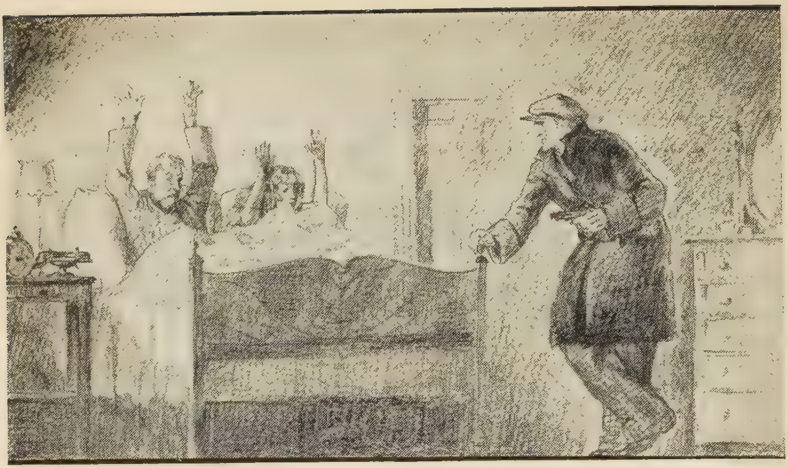
The writing of plays furnishes a different type of composition than is generally used in class work. To try your skill in that direction you might use the following data and compose a one-act play with an interesting movement and plot, and with a surprise ending.

Setting: Stony Ridge, Maryland.

Characters: HENRY DOUGLAS, *a Union soldier of '63.*
RUTH, *his granddaughter, sixteen.*
WILLIAM HARDIN, *a Confederate soldier, and neighbor of Douglas.*
CARL, *his grandson, a lad of eighteen.*
Any other minor characters as needed.

FOR FURTHER READING

The Cross-Stitch Heart	*Rachel Lyman Field*
Three Pills in a Bottle	*Rachel Lyman Field*
Rosalind	*Sir James M. Barrie*
A King for Cinderella	*Sir James M. Barrie*
Quality Street	*Sir James M. Barrie*
Dear Brutus	*Sir James M. Barrie*
The Poor Little Rich Girl	*Eleanor Gates*
The Road to Yesterday	*Beulah Marie Dix*



POST MORTEMS*

A Farce

Charles Divine

CHARACTERS

Mr. Richard Barker
Mrs. Richard Barker
Jimmy, *a burglar*
Al, *his pal*

Scene: *A bedroom, attractively furnished, with a door from the hall at the upper left, and on the opposite side of the room two doors, one to an alcove, lower right; the other to the bathroom, upper right. There is a bed in the back of the room, at the middle; a bureau at its right; a dressing table*

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with a lamp lit at its left, and also at the left is a large window across the embrasure of which hang heavy curtains.

At the rise of the curtain JIMMY, *the burglar, enters cautiously from the window, left, and examines the dimly lit room. He goes to the dressing table and discovers a jewel case there. His further examination of the room is interrupted by the sound of approaching voices. From his pocket he takes a pistol which he holds grimly in his hand as he glides behind the window curtain, where he waits.* MR. BARKER *enters angrily, followed by his wife, at the door at the left. They are in evening dress.* MRS. BARKER *switches on more light. In the center of the bedroom* MR. BARKER *wrenches off his dinner coat.*

Mr. Barker. I'm fed up with this wrangling! [*He dives into the alcove at the right and reappears with a bathrobe over his arm.*] Fed up!

Mrs. Barker. Beast!

[*She sits down at the dressing table where she removes a necklace.* THE BURGLAR, *standing behind the curtain but visible to the audience, watches her eagerly.*]

Mr. Barker. I suppose so. Where are my pajamas?

Mrs. Barker. [*Dropping her necklace into the jewel box.*] In the bathroom . . . [*She adds accusingly.*] where you left them yourself! [MR. BARKER *goes into the bathroom at the right.*] I hate you!

Mr. Barker. [*Calling from the bathroom, as he gets in his pajamas.*] So do I—I mean I hate you.

Mrs. Barker. [*Taking rings from her fingers.*] You won't do anything that's expected of you. I'll never go through another evening like this one!

Mr. Barker. [*Still talking from the bathroom, offstage.*] You won't get the chance. . . . The cap is off the tube of toothpaste again—where you left it yourself! Oozing out all over the shelf. Ugh, what a sticky mess!

Mrs. Barker. [*Bitterly.*] To think that you picked out the evening when the Newcombs came to call, to make such a fool of yourself! You could have done it just as well any other evening—when the Womsers were here, or the Dibbles, or the Flumerfelts, or those men from your office you thought we ought to entertain, and who left cigar ashes in all the plates! . . . You knew the Newcombs were the most important people socially in town. And we've only been here a year! [*She rises and goes into the alcove to undress.*]

Mr. Barker. I did what any intelligent man would do, didn't I? [*Pause.*] You don't think you possess all the finesse in the world, do you? [*He pauses. Silence. No answer.*] Do you? Do you think you've got a monopoly on it, and that you can . . .

[*He enters from the bathroom, breaking off his speech as he discovers, disconcerted, that she is not there.*]

Mrs. Barker. [*Speaking from the alcove.*] What did you say?

Mr. Barker. I asked if you think you possess all the finesse in the world!

Mrs. Barker. [*From the alcove, witheringly.*] Finesse? You? With a sledge hammer! No wonder you're in the iron business.

Mr. Barker. It was good enough business to buy you that pearl necklace you just took off.

[THE BURGLAR *gazes fascinated at the jewel box, which* MR. BARKER *approaches and glances at a moment.*]

Mrs. Barker. Mercenary! I don't know what the Newcombs will think.

Mr. Barker. I know what I think. I'm disgusted when I think of to-night—and your diamonds! [THE BURGLAR'S *interest increases.*] There you sat, with the three biggest diamonds you could hold in your hand, and four others.

[THE BURGLAR *is all agog.*]

Mrs. Barker. Yes, I had the diamonds . . . [*She reënters wearing a dressing robe over her nightgown.*] the ace, king, queen, ten, nine, eight, and three. But you didn't have a bid. You only had the measly little five spot.

[THE BURGLAR, *suddenly crestfallen, makes a gesture of chagrin.*]

Mr. Barker. But I had the queen of spades, ten, three, the ace and king of hearts, and a little one, and six clubs—ace, jack, ten . . . [*he counts them off deliberately*] . . . nine and two others.

[THE BURGLAR'S *interest renews in listening to the argument.*]

Mrs. Barker. But Mrs. Newcomb had five diamonds to the jack.

Mr. Barker. That wouldn't have made any difference if . . .

Mrs. Barker. The difference was that you played the hand like a moron! And we lost the rubber! [*She sweeps past him, goes over to the bed, gets in, pulling the covers about her, and discards her dressing robe, which she flings from her.*] You shouldn't have bid three no trump. What you need is some bridge sense!

Mr. Barker. [*Crawling glumly into his side of the bed and leaving a wide, angry space between him and his* WIFE.] Mr. Newcomb was out of diamonds, and he happened to hold the king of clubs and three others. What you need is some common sense!

Mrs. Barker. What I need is a divorce!

Mr. Barker. You'll get it . . . after this.

Mrs. Barker. Yes, and I'll marry again.

Mr. Barker. I suppose so. A fool and her alimony are soon parted.

Mrs. Barker. Put out the light! I want to sleep.

[MR. BARKER *reaches for the electric button near the bed and extinguishes the lights. He pulls the covers up to his chin and prepares to sleep. His* WIFE *seems to be asleep already, as if exhaustion had come to her tired nerves.* MR. BARKER *closes his eyes and sleeps, too. After a moment* JIMMY, THE BURGLAR, *moves from behind the curtain, glides towards the dressing table, and is about to reach for the jewel case when he makes a slight noise and hears a movement in the bed. Swiftly he glides back behind the curtain again.*]

Mr. Barker. [*Waking, reaches for the electric-light button, pushes it, and floods the room with light again. Beside him his* WIFE *sits up in bed and blinks her eyes, yawning.*] I thought I heard somebody tramping.

Mrs. Barker. [*Rubbing her eyes, and only partially catching his words.*] Trumping, did you say? Whether it's trumps or no trumps, you'd overbid.

Mr. Barker. Are you going to keep that up forever? I had a bid that last hand.

[*Behind the curtain* THE BURGLAR *grows impatient and restive.*]

Mrs. Barker. [*Now fully awake.*] But not three no trumps!

Mr. Barker. You bid three diamonds yourself, didn't you?

[*He faces her in bed, with all the anger reawakened in him.*]

Mrs. Barker. Yes, counting on your original no-trump bid for support. I had two singletons which were good for diamonds but not for no trump. There was no reëntry in my hand. [*Behind the curtain* THE BURGLAR *finds it more and more difficult to remain still. He leans forward as if about to step out and reveal himself. He clenches and unclenches one hand. The other still holds the pistol.*] If I had a raise in no trump, I would have gone on to two no trump without raising the contract to three and going to diamonds.

Mr. Barker. [*Growling.*] I could have made it anyway!

Mrs. Barker. No, you couldn't!

Jimmy. [*Unable to hold himself back any longer, steps out with the pistol in his hand.*] Look here!

Mrs. Barker. [*Screaming.*] Oh!

[JIMMY *moves forward with an eager stride.*]

Mrs. Barker. Don't kill us!

Mr. Barker. [*Holding up his hands.*] No, don't shoot. We've got our hands up. [*To his* WIFE.] Put your hands up, Mabel! Are you paralyzed?

Jimmy. Oh, don't worry! I just want to talk to you.

Mrs. Barker. [*Beseechingly.*] Take my rings and things—there on the dressing table—and go!

Jimmy. [*Shaking his head.*] No. I want to talk to your husband about that hand.

Mr. Barker. [*Looking at his uplifted hands above his head.*] Which hand?

Jimmy. The one you held downstairs. [*To* MR. BARKER *re-*

assuringly.] You could have made your bid. But it was played wrong. When the singleton queen of clubs was led from your hand, madam, and he didn't drop his ace on it [*Turning from* MRS. BARKER *to* MR. BARKER *again, and gesturing at the latter with the hand holding the pistol;* MR. BARKER *winces and* MRS. BARKER *catches her breath, astonished.*]; that's where he made his mistake. He should have overtaken it. Because by taking the trick with the queen he was forced to lead from the dummy . . . and he could only lead straight into his opponent's hand.

Mr. Barker. [*Eyeing* JIMMY *up and down.*] Good night!

Jimmy. Don't you see that by taking the trick with the queen you were forced to lead from the dummy . . . and you could only lead straight into your opponent's hand? [*He gestures insistently, still with the hand holding the pistol.*]

Mr. Barker. [*Bewildered.*] Aw, aw. . . .

Mrs. Barker. [*Forgetting the menacing pistol in her interest in the bridge technic, leans forward and beams at* JIMMY.] That's right! [*Turns to her* HUSBAND.] He's absolutely correct, Richard. [*To* JIMMY.] But how do you know all about this?

Jimmy. I've seen too many games lost by the same mistake.

Mrs. Barker. You have? You play bridge?

Jimmy. I used to make my living at it. . . . I and my partner.

Mrs. Barker. You made your living at it? Where?

Jimmy. On suburban trains, riding into the big cities with the bankers and brokers, and at clubs . . . before they got wise and set the police on our trail. Now bridge is ruined for me as a profession, though I still yield to no one in my acquaintance with the fine points of the game. I remember the night I won five thousand dollars from Van Rensselaer Gould. . . .

Mrs. Barker. [*Impressed.*] You've played with him?

Jimmy. Yes, indeed. But in your case to-night you were in the dummy with no hearts left and no clubs left. [*He gestures again with the gun at* MR. BARKER, *who ducks.*] Don't you see my point?

Mr. Barker. [*Hastily.*] Yes, yes, I see it, all too well. But—but please be careful. It might explode.

Jimmy. [*Remembering that he is still holding the gun.*] Oh, excuse me. [*He lowers the gun.*] I got so interested talking shop that I forgot my manners. [*He puts the gun in his pocket.*] A thousand pardons. [*He turns down his coat collar and reveals a fine silk shirt and an elegantly striped necktie. He is well dressed, urbane, and polished. He continues to talk with gestures free of firearms, pausing once to glance at his hands and to rub his finger nails on his sleeve, to preserve the glow of his manicure.*] And without clubs, the best suit in your own hand, cleared. That's why you got set.

Mr. Barker. This is amazing.

Mrs. Barker. [*Admiringly.*] Perfectly wonderful!

Jimmy. Now if you, sir, had overtaken her queen with your ace, you would have been in your own hand. At the end you would have run four club tricks, and [*He concludes with a graceful gesture.*] made four no trump!

Mr. Barker. [*Triumphantly.*] And rubber! [*To his* WIFE.] I told you so!

Mrs. Barker. I'd believe him [*Nodding at* JIMMY.] but not you. [*Contemptuously to her* HUSBAND. *She turns to* JIMMY *and continues.*] Could you show me the play? [*She swings out of bed, wraps her dressing gown about her, and fumbles eagerly for her slippers.*]

Jimmy. Delighted! Got some cards?

Mrs. Barker. In the upper bureau drawer. Richard! [*To her* HUSBAND.] Get the table!

[*While* JIMMY *goes to the bureau for a deck of cards,* MR. BARKER *brings a table hastily from the alcove and sets it up in the middle of the room.* MRS. BARKER *drags up chairs.*]

Jimmy. [*Sorting out the cards as he talks.*] You had the queen of spades, didn't you, Mister . . . Mister . . .

Mr. Barker. Barker. Yes, the queen and three others.

Jimmy. My name's James Courtney. And the ace and the king of hearts. . . .

Mrs. Barker. Here! Let me help you distribute them. [*She takes the cards from* JIMMY.] Oh, I wish we could play it out like a regular hand. But we lack a fourth, don't we?

Jimmy. No, we don't. Al is outside.

Mrs. Barker. Who?

Jimmy. My pal. I'll call him. [*He steps to the window and calls quietly into the night.*] Al! Come on in! I've got a little surprise for you.

Al. [*Entering and giving a start at the sight of* Mr. *and* Mrs. Barker, *and quickly drawing his revolver.*] What's up? Have they got the drop on you, Jimmy?

Jimmy. No, no. These are friends. Put away your gun!

Al. [*At first looking astonished and then obeying wearily.*] You're always meeting friends—and letting them interfere with business. [*To* Mr. *and* Mrs. Barker.] No offense, folks, but you don't know Jimmy the way I do.

Jimmy. [*Introducing him.*] This is Al, Mrs. Barker. Al Wiggers. And Mr. Barker. Al Wiggers.

Mrs. Barker. [*Nodding.*] Charmed!

Mr. Barker. How do you do? [*They shake hands.*]

Al. [*Looking at the card table and then shaking his head admiringly.*] Jimmy can smell a bridge game a mile off! [*He begins to wander curiously about the room.*]

Jimmy. [*Protesting self-consciously, though greatly pleased.*] No, no. It was quite by accident. [*He resumes his chair at the table between* Mr. *and* Mrs. Barker.]

Mrs. Barker. A lucky one for us. I've never met anybody who displayed a surer grasp of the intricacies of the game.

Mr. Barker. [*Glancing conciliatingly at his* Wife.] Yes, we're very fortunate, aren't we, dear?

Mrs. Barker. [*Rebuffing him disdainfully.*] Don't speak to me!

Mr. Barker. [*Turning back to* Jimmy.] I'll bet I can make my bid the way I said.

Jimmy. How much do you want to bet? Ten cents a point or twenty?

Mr. Barker. Make it twenty.

Jimmy. All right. [*He catches sight of* Al *coming away from the dressing table.*] Al! What have you got there?

Al. Nothing.

Jimmy. Don't lie to me! Come here! [AL *approaches reluctantly.*] Take that hand out of your pocket.

[*As he obeys,* JIMMY *reaches into* AL'S *pocket and takes out some jewelry.*]

Mrs. Barker. My necklace!

Jimmy. Permit me to return it. [*He hands the necklace to her apologetically.*] Al simply forgot himself. [*To* AL.] I'm surprised at you! We're among friends and bridge players. [*He motions* AL *into the chair opposite and reaches into his own pocket, turning to* MRS. BARKER.] That reminds me, Mrs. Barker, I meant to return these rings several minutes ago. [*He deposits* MRS. BARKER'S *rings in front of her.*] I picked them up before I really understood. You'll pardon me?

Mrs. Barker. Oh, thanks. . . . You are a gentleman.

Mr. Barker. And a scholar.

Al. [*Groaning.*] But an awful poor business partner!

Jimmy. [*Taking up his cards, as the other do theirs.*] Let's see, it's my first bid, isn't it? [MRS. BARKER *nods.*] One club.

Mr. Barker. One heart.

Al. [*Absent-mindedly, looking at the jewelry in front of* MRS. BARKER.] Two diamond rings!

Jimmy. Al! Be yourself!

Al. [*Piteously.*] I am myself.

Jimmy. Then be somebody else for a minute.

Al. All right. I pass the diamonds.

Jimmy. You'd better.

Mrs. Barker. [*To* AL.] It was just a slip. I forgive you, Mr. Wiggers.

Al. You would if you knew all I've suffered from bridge.

Mrs. Barker. Suffered?

Al. Yes. It kept us two extra weeks in Atlanta after our term was finished.

Mr. Barker. In the penitentiary?

Al. [*Dismally.*] Yes. He [*Indicating* JIMMY.] wouldn't leave when we were free to go.

Mrs. Barker. Why not?

Al. Because our cell mates played such good hands of bridge.

Jimmy wanted to keep the game going until their terms were up. They were serving life sentences for murder.

Jimmy. They were remarkably good players.

Al. Even now, every time we get within a day's ride of Atlanta, he wants to go back there for the week-end.

Mr. Barker. [*To his* Wife.] It's your bid, Mabel.

Mrs. Barker. Don't speak to me, I said!

[Al's *jaw drops in astonishment. He gazes from* Mrs. Barker *to* Mr. Barker *and back.*]

Mr. Barker. [*Explanatorily to* Al.] Mrs. Barker is not herself to-night.

Mrs. Barker. Don't pay any attention to him, Mr. Wiggers. Where bridge is concerned, my husband is *non compos mentis.*

Al. [*Who doesn't understand the Latin phrase, gapes blankly for a moment, and then pretends that he understands.*] Oh, he's non compo . . . he's like that, is he? [*Nods his head.*] What does the doctor say about it?

Jimmy. [*Nudging him.*] Keep still!

Mrs. Barker. Two hearts.

Mr. Barker. [*To* Al.] That ordinarily beat as one. But not to-night, Mr. Wiggers.

Al. [*Who still does not understand.*] Yes, yes. It must be very painful.

Jimmy. Two spades.

Mr. Barker. Two no trump.

Mrs. Barker. Pass.

Jimmy. Three spades.

Mr. Barker. Three no trump.

Mrs. Barker. [*Exasperated.*] You insist on making a fool of yourself again!

Mr. Barker. I can make the bid. Wait and see.

Jimmy. We're playing for high stakes, remember?

Mr. Barker. I know. It's your lead, Mr. Wiggers. [Al *leads, and they begin playing the hand.* Mrs. Barker, *who is dummy, looks on, enraged, at her* Husband. *At the end, however, he is the winner. He is exultant.*] I made it! I made it!

Mrs. Barker. Fool's luck.

Jimmy. You beat us all right. I'll have to admit it. I never thought it would work out that way.

Al. [*Discouraged.*] I knew we were beat as soon as he [*Nodding at* JIMMY.] saw a deck of cards.

[JIMMY *begins figuring with pencil and paper.*]

Mrs. Barker. Can't we go on and play another?

Jimmy. No, I'm sorry, Mrs. Barker. But I'll have to decline. You see, Al and I have urgent reasons for wanting to catch a train before the town is astir. [*Consulting his paper.*] We owe you fourteen dollars apiece. Have you got yours, Al?

Al. [*Opening his wallet with a sigh and counting out the exact amount, all he has.*] Now we'll have to take a freight!

Jimmy. [*Emptying the contents of his own purse on the table.*] I'm eleven dollars short.

Mr. Barker. That's all right. Don't think of it.

Mrs. Barker. Of course! We'd feel like robbers . . . oh, I beg your pardon. I mean . . .

Jimmy. That's all right. I'm not sensitive. [*He takes his gun out of one pocket and a jimmy out of the other.*] My gun is not much good. I picked it up second hand for ten dollars. And this jimmy is worth one dollar. That makes it just right. [*He places these objects with the pile of money on the table and pushes his chair back.*]

Mr. Barker. Well, if you insist. [*Elated, he reaches over and pats his* WIFE'S *hand.*] Three no trump, and I made it, dear.

Mrs. Barker. [*Jerking her hand away.*] Don't touch me!

Jimmy. [*Studying them both a moment.*] Come, come! You shouldn't keep this up, my friends. [*He addresses them eloquently.*] It's been my experience that the worst thing about bridge is the post mortem. I've got into more trouble talking the game over afterwards than I ever did playing it . . . even with my own cards!

Al. [*Adding his argument.*] Yes, you shouldn't quarrel. Look at us—we's been pals for ten years, Jimmy and I, and we've never had words.

Jimmy. Al is right. A harmonious relationship is the finest thing in the world, Mrs. Barker. Don't dispute. After a game is over you should forget it. You should burn your bridges behind you.

Al. Sure! [*To* Mr. Barker.] Give the wife a kiss! [Mr. Barker *goes over to his* Wife *to kiss her, and she melts forgivingly in his arms.*] That's very nice. That ought to be good for his non compos.

Jimmy. [*Preparing to go.*] Now we can say good night knowing that we leave a happy household behind us.

[*He and* Al *both bow.*]

Mrs. Barker. Good night. Good night, Mr. Wiggers. It's been delightful.

Mr. Barker. Give us a ring the next time you're in town.

Al. [*Puzzled, to* Jimmy.] Give them a ring? [*Stupidly.*] She's got a whole table full!

Jimmy. He means on the telephone, stupid! [*He pauses near the window.*] We should have won that last trick if my partner had played differently.

Al. [*Retorting quickly.*] How do you get like that?

Jimmy. [*Warmly.*] Common sense! You should have returned my last lead.

Al. [*Angrily.*] You think you're the only one who knows how to play this game!

[*He goes out through the window, followed by* Jimmy, *both gesticulating furiously.*]

Jimmy. Why didn't you, you dumb-bell?

Al. [*Loudly.*] How was I to know he was out of hearts!

Curtain

CHARLES DIVINE

The Story of His Life

"The idea (of *Post Mortems*) came," declares Mr. Divine, "from contemplating the hold which the game of bridge has on the American public. It was first written as a short story, and as such appeared in the *Red Book Magazine*. Later it was made into a one-act play."

This suggests at once the sure instinct of the journalist. As a matter of fact, after his graduation from Cornell University in 1912, Mr. Divine worked for five years as reporter on the *New York Sun,* and then began his career of free-lance author. His interest in the theatre led to his serving as dramatic critic of the *New York Telegram* for one summer.

In addition to *Post Mortems* he has published another one-act play, *Mr. Pirtle Drums It In,* but has written "a dozen unpublished ones." He is also the author of three books of poems, *City Ways and Company Streets, Gypsy Gold,* and *The Road to Town,* and a novel, *Cognac Hill.*

Mr. Divine is a native of Binghamton, New York, and a graduate of its Central High School. His home is now in New York City.

A Word about the Play

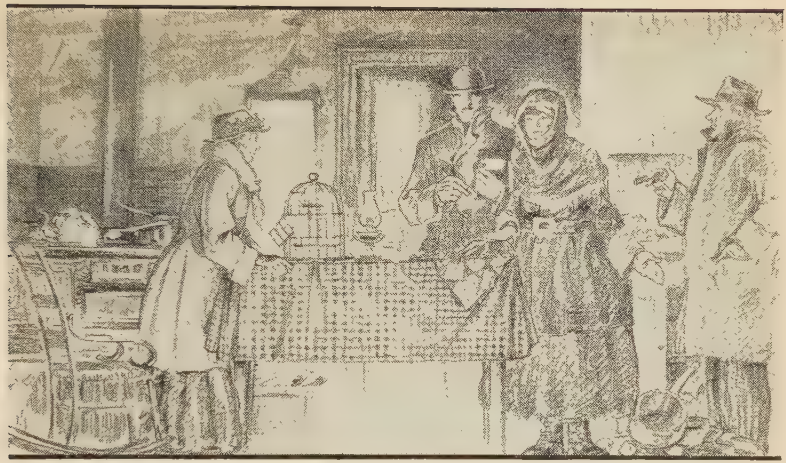
Here is a dramatized idea which is excellent entertainment. The probabilities may be stretched a bit, but the author's purpose is merely to amuse. The very absurdity of the situations, the contrast in types, the ease with which the characters accommodate themselves to the reversal of their positions—all these contribute largely to the entertainment values in this delightful farce.

For Study and Discussion

What is the importance of the setting in this play? It will be helpful to make a diagram indicating the position of the various entrances and the furniture. Are the characters real and plausible, or are they merely types? Which is the best drawn? Is the mania for bridge pictured in this play exaggerated for dramatic purposes? Is this permissible? Is the quarrel between Mr. and Mrs. Barker exaggerated? How much of the fun comes from the situations, and how much from the lines? Was the ending of the play expected, or was it foreshadowed in any way? How should the various rôles be acted?

For Further Reading

Spreading the News	*Lady Gregory*
The Workhouse Ward	*Lady Gregory*
The Trysting Place	*Booth Tarkington*
Evening Dress Indispensable	*Roland Pertwee*
Sham	*Frank Tompkins*
The Lost Silk Hat	*Lord Dunsany*
The Stepmother	*Arnold Bennett*
Suppressed Desires	*Susan Glaspell*



TRIFLES *

A Tragedy

SUSAN GLASPELL

CHARACTERS

GEORGE HENDERSON, *County Attorney*
HENRY PETERS, *Sheriff*
LEWIS HALE, *a neighboring farmer*
MRS. PETERS
MRS. HALE

SCENE: *The kitchen in the now abandoned farmhouse of* JOHN WRIGHT, *a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the bread-box, a dish-towel on the table—other signs of incompleted work. At the rear the outer door opens*

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and the SHERIFF *comes in followed by the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *and* HALE. *The* SHERIFF *and* HALE *are men in middle life, the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *is a young man; all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove. They are followed by the two women—the* SHERIFF'S *wife first. She is a slight, wiry woman, a thin nervous face.* MRS. HALE *is larger and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door.*

County Attorney. [*Rubbing his hands.*] This feels good. Come up to the fire, ladies.

Mrs. Peters. [*After taking a step forward.*] I'm not—cold.

Sheriff. [*Unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove as if to mark the beginning of official business.*] Now, Mr. Hale, before we move things about, you explain to Mr. Henderson just what you saw when you came here yesterday morning.

County Attorney. By the way, has anything been moved? Are things just as you left them yesterday?

Sheriff. [*Looking about.*] It's just the same. When it dropped below zero last night I thought I'd better send Frank out this morning to make a fire for us—no use getting pneumonia with a big case on, but I told him not to touch anything except the stove—and you know Frank.

County Attorney. Somebody should have been left here yesterday.

Sheriff. Oh—yesterday. When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy—I want you to know I had my hands full yesterday. I knew you could get back from Omaha by to-day and as long as I went over everything here myself——

County Attorney. Well, Mr. Hale, tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning.

Hale. Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place and as I got here I said, "I'm going to see if I can't get John Wright to go in with me on a party telephone." I spoke to Wright about it once before and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John——

County Attorney. Let's talk about that later, Mr. Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.

Hale. I didn't hear or see anything; I knocked at the door, and still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up, it was past eight o'clock. So I knocked again, and I thought I heard somebody say, "Come in." I wasn't sure, I'm not sure yet, but I opened the door—this door [*Indicating the door by which the two women are still standing.*] and there in that rocker—[*Pointing to it.*] sat Mrs. Wright.

[*They all look at the rocker.*]

County Attorney. What—was she doing?

Hale. She was rockin' back and forth. She had her apron in her hand and was kind of—pleating it.

County Attorney. And how did she—look?

Hale. Well, she looked queer.

County Attorney. How do you mean—queer?

Hale. Well, as if she didn't know what she was going to do next. And kind of done up.

County Attorney. How did she seem to feel about your coming?

Hale. Why, I don't think she minded—one way or other. She didn't pay much attention. I said, "How do, Mrs. Wright, it's cold, ain't it?" And she said, "Is it?"—and went on kind of pleating at her apron. Well, I was surprised; she didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to set down, but just sat there, not even looking at me, so I said, "I want to see John." And then she—laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see

John?" "No," she says, kind o' dull like. "Ain't he home?" says I. "Yes," says she, "he's home." "Then why can't I see him?" I asked her, out of patience. "'Cause he's dead," says she. "Dead?" says I. She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin' back and forth. "Why—where is he?" says I, not knowing what to say. She just pointed upstairs—like that. [*Himself pointing to the room above.*] I got up, with the idea of going up there. I walked from there to here—then I says, "Why, what did he die of?" "He died of a rope round his neck," says she, and just went on pleatin' at her apron. Well, I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—need help. We went upstairs and there he was lyin'——

County Attorney. I think I'd rather have you go into that upstairs, where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story.

Hale. Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked . . . [*Stops, his face twitches.*] but Harry, he went up to him, and he said, "No, he's dead all right, and we'd better not touch anything." So we went back down stairs. She was still sitting that same way. "Has anybody been notified?" I asked. "No," says she, unconcerned. "Who did this, Mrs. Wright?" said Harry. He said it business-like—and she stopped pleatin' of her apron. "I don't know," she says. "You don't know?" says Harry. "No," says she. "Weren't you sleepin' in the bed with him?" says Harry. "Yes," says she, "but I was on the inside." "Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him and you didn't wake up?" says Harry. "I didn't wake up," she said after him. We must 'a looked as if we didn't see how that could be, for after a minute she said, "I sleep sound." Harry was going to ask her more questions but I said maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the coroner, or the sheriff, so Harry went fast as he could to Rivers' place, where there's a telephone.

County Attorney. And what did Mrs. Wright do when she knew that you had gone for the coroner?

Hale. She moved from that chair to this one over here [*Pointing to a small chair in the corner.*] and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me—scared. [*The* County Attorney, *who has had his notebook out, makes a note.*] I dunno, maybe it wasn't scared. I wouldn't like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr. Lloyd came, and you, Mr. Peters, and so I guess that's all I know that you don't.

County Attorney. [*Looking around.*] I guess we'll go upstairs first—and then out to the barn and around there. [*To* the Sheriff.] You're convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive.

Sheriff. Nothing here but kitchen things.

[*The* County Attorney, *after again looking around the kitchen, opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky.*]

County Attorney. Here's a nice mess.

[*The women draw nearer.*]

Mrs. Peters. [*To the other woman.*] Oh, her fruit; it did freeze. [*To the* Attorney.] She worried when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break.

Sheriff. Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves.

County Attorney. I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about.

Hale. Well, women are used to worrying over trifles.

[*The two women move a little closer together.*]

County Attorney. [*With the gallantry of a young politician.*] And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies? [*The women do not unbend. He goes to the sink, takes a dipperful of water from the pail and pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. Starts to wipe them on the roller-towel, turns it for a cleaner place.*] Dirty towels! [*Kicks his foot against the pans under the sink.*] Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?

Mrs. Hale. [*Stiffly.*] There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm.

County Attorney. To be sure. And yet [*With a little bow to her.*] I know there are some Dickson county farmhouses which do not have such roller towels.

[*He gives it a pull to expose its full length again.*]

Mrs. Hale. Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be.

County Attorney. Ah, loyal to your sex, I see. But you and Mrs. Wright were neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too.

Mrs. Hale. [*Shaking her head.*] I've not seen much of her of late years. I've not been in this house—it's more than a year.

County Attorney. And why was that? You didn't like her?

Mrs. Hale. I liked her all well enough. Farmers' wives have their hands full, Mr. Henderson. And then——

County Attorney. Yes?

Mrs. Hale. [*Looking about.*] It never seemed a very cheerful place.

County Attorney. No—it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct.

Mrs. Hale. Well, I don't know as Wright had, either.

County Attorney. You mean that they didn't get on very well?

Mrs. Hale. No, I don't mean anything. But I don't think a place'd be any cheerfuller for John Wright's being in it.

County Attorney. I'd like to talk more of that a little later. I want to get the lay of things upstairs now. [*He goes to the left, where three steps lead to a stair door.*]

Sheriff. I suppose anything Mrs. Peters does'll be all right. She was to take in some clothes for her, you know, and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday.

County Attorney. Yes, but I would like to see what you take, Mrs. Peters, and keep an eye out for anything that might be of use to us.

Mrs. Peters. Yes, Mr. Henderson.

[*The women listen to the men's steps on the stairs, then look about the kitchen.*]

Mrs. Hale. I'd hate to have men coming into my kitchen, snooping around and criticising. [*She arranges the pans under sink which the* Lawyer *had shoved out of place.*]

Mrs. Peters. Of course it's no more than their duty.

Mrs. Hale. Duty's all right, but I guess that deputy sheriff that came out to make the fire might have got a little of this on. [*Gives the roller towel a pull.*] Wish I'd thought of that sooner. Seems mean to talk about her for not having things slicked up when she had to come away in such a hurry.

Mrs. Peters. [*Who has gone to a small table in the left rear corner of the room, and lifted one end of a towel that covers a pan.*] She had bread set. [*Stands still.*]

Mrs. Hale. [*Eyes fixed on a loaf of bread beside the breadbox, which is on a low shelf at the other side of the room. Moves slowly toward it.*] She was going to put this in there. [*Picks up loaf, then abruptly drops it. In a manner of returning to familiar things.*] It's a shame about her fruit. I wonder if it's all gone. [*Gets up on the chair and looks.*] I think there's some here, that's all right, Mrs. Peters. Yes—here; [*Holding it toward the window.*] this is cherries, too. [*Looking again.*] I declare I believe that's the only one. [*Gets down, bottle in her hand. Goes to the sink and wipes it off on the outside.*] She'll feel awful bad after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer.

[*She puts the bottle on the big kitchen table, center of the room. With a sigh, is about to sit down in the rocking-chair. Before she is seated realizes what chair it is; with a slow look at it, steps back. The chair which she has touched rocks back and forth.*]

Mrs. Peters. Well, I must get those things from the front room closet. [*She goes to the door at the right, but after looking into the other room, steps back.*] You coming with me, Mrs. Hale? You could help me carry them.

[*They go in the other room; reappear,* Mrs. Peters *carrying a dress and skirt,* Mrs. Hale *following with a pair of shoes.*]

Mrs. Peters. My, it's cold in there.

[*She puts the clothes on the big table, and hurries to the stove.*]

Mrs. Hale. [*Examining the skirt.*] Wright was close. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in?

Mrs. Peters. She said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want, for there isn't much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. She said they was in the top drawer in this cupboard. Yes, here. And then her little shawl that always hung behind the door. [*Opens stair door and looks.*] Yes, here it is. [*Quickly shuts door leading upstairs.*]

Mrs. Hale. [*Abruptly moving toward her.*] Mrs. Peters?

Mrs. Peters. Yes, Mrs. Hale?

Mrs. Hale. Do you think she did it?

Mrs. Peters. [*In a frightened voice.*] Oh, I don't know.

Mrs. Hale. Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. Worrying about her fruit.

Mrs. Peters. [*Starts to speak, glances up, where footsteps are heard in the room above. In a low voice.*] Mr. Peters says it looks bad for her. Mr. Henderson is awful sarcastic in a speech and he'll make fun of her sayin' she didn't wake up.

Mrs. Hale. Well, I guess John Wright didn't wake when they was slipping that rope under his neck.

Mrs. Peters. No, it's strange. It must have been done awful crafty and still. They say it was such a—funny way to kill a man, rigging it all up like that.

Mrs. Hale. That's just what Mr. Hale said. There was a gun in the house. He says that's what he can't understand.

Mrs. Peters. Mr. Henderson said coming out that what was needed for the case was a motive; something to show anger, or—sudden feeling.

Mrs. Hale. [*Who is standing by the table.*] Well, I don't see any signs of anger around here. [*She puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the table, stands looking down at table, one* *half of which is clean, the other half messy.*] It's wiped to here. [*Makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at loaf of bread outside the breadbox. Drops towel. In that voice of coming back to familiar things.*] Wonder how they are finding things upstairs. I hope she had it a little more red-up up there. You know, it seems kind of *sneaking*. Locking her up in town and then coming out here and trying to get her own house to turn against her!

Mrs. Peters. But Mrs. Hale, the law is the law.

Mrs. Hale. I s'pose 'tis. [*Unbuttoning her coat.*] Better loosen up your things, Mrs. Peters. You won't feel them when you go out.

[MRS. PETERS *takes off her fur tippet, goes to hang it on hook at back of room, stands looking at the under part of the small corner table.*]

Mrs. Peters. She was piecing a quilt. [*She brings the large sewing basket and they look at the bright pieces.*]

Mrs. Hale. It's log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn't it? I wonder if she was goin' to quilt it or just knot it?

[*Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs. The* SHERIFF *enters followed by* HALE *and the* COUNTY ATTORNEY.]

Sheriff. They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it!

[*The men laugh, the women look abashed.*]

County Attorney. [*Rubbing his hands over the stove.*] Frank's fire didn't do much up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up.

[*The men go outside.*]

Mrs. Hale. [*Resentfully.*] I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. [*She sits down at the big table smoothing out a block with decision.*] I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

Mrs. Peters. [*Apologetically.*] Of course they've got awful important things on their minds. [*Pulls up a chair and joins* MRS. HALE *at the table.*]

Mrs. Hale. [*Examining another block.*] Mrs. Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about!

[*After she has said this they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant* MRS. HALE *has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing.*]

Mrs. Peters. Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?

Mrs. Hale. [*Mildly.*] Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good. [*Threading a needle.*] Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

Mrs. Peters. [*Nervously.*] I don't think we ought to touch things.

Mrs. Hale. I'll just finish up this end. [*Suddenly stopping and leaning forward.*] Mrs. Peters?

Mrs. Peters. Yes, Mrs. Hale?

Mrs. Hale. What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

Mrs. Peters. Oh—I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired. [MRS. HALE *starts to say something, looks at* MRS. PETERS, *then goes on sewing.*] Well, I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think. [*Putting apron and other things together.*] I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string.

Mrs. Hale. In that cupboard, maybe.

Mrs. Peters. [*Looking in cupboard.*] Why, here's a birdcage. [*Holds it up.*] Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?

Mrs. Hale. Why, I don't know whether she did or not—I've not been here for so long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I don't know as she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.

Mrs. Peters. [*Glancing around.*] Seems funny to think of a bird here. But she must have had one, or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it.

Mrs. Hale. I s'pose maybe the cat got it.

Mrs. Peters. No, she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. My cat got in her room and she was real upset and asked me to take it out.

Mrs. Hale. My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain't it?

Mrs. Peters. [*Examining the cage.*] Why, look at this door. It's broke. One hinge is pulled apart.

Mrs. Hale. [*Looking too.*] Looks as if someone must have been rough with it.

Mrs. Peters. Why, yes. [*She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table.*]

Mrs. Hale. I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd be about it. I don't like this place.

Mrs. Peters. But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

Mrs. Hale. It would, wouldn't it? [*Dropping her sewing.*] But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when *she* was here. I—[*Looking around the room.*]—wish I had.

Mrs. Peters. But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale—your house and your children.

Mrs. Hale. I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's why I ought to have come. I—I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I dunno what it is, but it's a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—— [*Shakes her head.*]

Mrs. Peters. Well, you mustn't reproach yourself, Mrs. Hale. Somehow we just don't see how it is with other folks until—something turns up.

Mrs. Hale. Not having children makes less work—but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?

Mrs. Peters. Not to know him; I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man.

Mrs. Hale. Yes—good; he didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—[*Shivers.*] Like a raw wind that gets to the bone. [*Pauses, her eye falling on the cage.*] I should think she would 'a wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went with it?

Mrs. Peters. I don't know, unless it got sick and died. [*She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again, both women watch it.*]

Mrs. Hale. You weren't raised round here, were you? [MRS. PETERS *shakes her head.*] You didn't know—her?

Mrs. Peters. Not till they brought her yesterday.

Mrs. Hale. She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change. [*Silence; then as if struck by a happy thought and relieved to get back to every day things.*] Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.

Mrs. Peters. Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale. There couldn't possibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her patches are in here—and her things.

[*They look in the sewing basket.*]

Mrs. Hale. Here's some red. I expect this has got sewing things in it. [*Brings out a fancy box.*] What a pretty box. Looks like something somebody would give you. Maybe her scissors are in here. [*Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose.*] Why— [MRS. PETERS *bends nearer, then turns her face away.*] There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

Mrs. Peters. Why, this isn't her scissors.

Mrs. Hale. [*Lifting the silk.*] Oh, Mrs. Peters—it's——

[MRS. PETERS *bends closer.*]

Mrs. Peters. It's the bird.

Mrs. Hale. [*Jumping up.*] But, Mrs. Peters—look at it! Its neck! Look at its neck! It's all—other side *to*.

Mrs. Peters. Somebody—wrung—its—neck.

[*Their eyes meet. A look of growing comprehension, of horror. Steps are heard outside.* MRS. HALE *slips box under* *quilt pieces, and sinks into her chair. Enter* SHERIFF *and* COUNTY ATTORNEY. MRS. PETERS *rises.*]

County Attorney. [*As one turning from serious things to little pleasantries.*] Well, ladies, have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?

Mrs. Peters. We think she was going to—knot it.

County Attorney. Well, that's interesting, I'm sure. [*Seeing the bird-cage.*] Has the bird flown?

Mrs. Hale. [*Putting more quilt pieces over the box.*] We think the—cat got it.

County Attorney. [*Preoccupied.*] Is there a cat?

[MRS. HALE *glances in a quick covert way at* MRS. PETERS.]

Mrs. Peters. Well, not now. They're superstitious, you know. They leave.

County Attorney. [*To* SHERIFF PETERS, *continuing an interrupted conversation.*] No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let's go up again and go over it piece by piece. [*They start upstairs.*] It would have been someone who knew just the——

[MRS. PETERS *sits down. The two women sit there not looking at one another, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now it is in the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they can not help saying it.*]

Mrs. Hale. She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box.

Mrs. Peters. [*In a whisper.*] When I was a girl—my kitten—there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes—and before I could get there— [*Covers her face an instant.*] If they hadn't held me back I would have—[*Catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly.*]—hurt him.

Mrs. Hale. [*With a slow look around her.*] I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around. [*Pause.*] No, Wright wouldn't like the bird—a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too.

Mrs. Peters. [*Moving uneasily.*] We don't know who killed the bird.

Mrs. Hale. I knew John Wright.

Mrs. Peters. It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him.

Mrs. Hale. His neck. Choked the life out of him. [*Her hand goes out and rests on the bird-cage.*]

Mrs. Peters. [*With rising voice.*] We don't know who killed him. We don't know.

Mrs. Hale. [*Her own feeling not interrupted.*] If there'd been years and years of nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still, after the bird was still.

Mrs. Peters. [*Something within her speaking.*] I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then——

Mrs. Hale. [*Moving*] How soon do you suppose they'll be through, looking for the evidence?

Mrs. Peters. I know what stillness is. [*Pulling herself back.*] The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale.

Mrs. Hale. [*Not as if answering that.*] I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. [*A look around the room.*] Oh, I wish I'd come over here once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?

Mrs. Peters. [*Looking upstairs.*] We mustn't—take on.

Mrs. Hale. I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs. Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing. [*Brushes her eyes, noticing the bottle of fruit, reaches out for it.*] If I was you I wouldn't tell her her fruit was gone. Tell her it ain't. Tell her it's all right. Take this in to prove it to her. She—she may never know whether it was broke or not.

Mrs. Peters. [*Takes the bottle, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins winding this around the bottle. In a false voice.*] My, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us. Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with—with—wouldn't they laugh!

[*The men are heard coming downstairs.*]

Mrs. Hale. [*Under her breath.*] Maybe they would—maybe they wouldn't.

County Attorney. No, Peters, it's all perfectly clear except a reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing. Something to show—something to make a story about—a thing that would connect up with this strange way of doing it——

[*The women's eyes meet for an instant. Enter* Hale *from outer door.*]

Hale. Well, I've got the team around. Pretty cold out there.

County Attorney. I'm going to stay here a while myself. [*To the* Sheriff.] You can send Frank out for me, can't you? I want to go over everything. I'm not satisfied that we can't do better.

Sheriff. Do you want to see what Mrs. Peters is going to take in?

[*The* Attorney *goes to the table, picks up the apron, laughs.*]

County Attorney. Oh, I guess they're not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out. [*Moves a few things about, disturbing the quilt pieces which cover the box. Steps back.*] No, Mrs. Peters doesn't need supervising. For that matter, a sheriff's wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs. Peters?

Mrs. Peters. Not—just that way.

Sheriff. [*Chuckling.*] Married to the law. [*Moves toward the other room.*] I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows.

County Attorney. [*Scoffingly.*] Oh, windows!

Sheriff. We'll be right out, Mr. Hale.

[HALE *goes outside. The* SHERIFF *follows the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *into the other room. Then* MRS. HALE *rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at* MRS. PETERS, *whose eyes make a slow turn, finally meeting* MRS. HALE'S. *A moment* MRS. HALE *holds her, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is concealed. Suddenly* MRS. PETERS *throws back quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is wearing. It is too big. She opens box, starts to take bird out, cannot touch it, goes to pieces, stands there helpless. Sound of a knob turning in the other room.* MRS. HALE *snatches the box and puts it in the pocket of her big coat. Enter* COUNTY ATTORNEY *and* SHERIFF.]

County Attorney. [*Facetiously.*] Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to —what is it you call it, ladies?

Mrs. Hale. [*Her hand against her pocket.*] We call it—knot it, Mr. Henderson.

Curtain

SUSAN GLASPELL

THE STORY OF HER LIFE

"THE idea of *Trifles* came to me when I was a reporter in Iowa," declares Miss Glaspell. "I thought of it first as a short story, and then saw it as a play. I consider it my best one-act play."

Miss Glaspell was born in Davenport, Iowa, in 1882, and after receiving her education in the public schools of Davenport and in Drake University, she entered newspaper work, becoming eventually State House and Legislative reporter for the Des Moines *News and Capital.* The experience was a valuable one when she later devoted her entire time to authorship.

When the Provincetown Players, that famous experimental group which introduced the work of Eugene O'Neill to the American theatre, was first formed, Miss Glaspell, together with her husband, George Cram Cook, was among the pioneers in that vital organization. *Trifles* was first performed by the Players at Provincetown, Massachusetts, August 8, 1916, with Miss Glaspell in the cast.

Her later plays include the uproarious *Suppressed Desires* (written in collaboration with George Cram Cook), *Close the Book*, *The Outside*, *Woman's Honor*, and *The People*. Her longer plays include *The Verge*, *Inheritors*, and *Bernice*. In addition to her American reputation, she has gained recognition abroad, where both professional and amateur production of her works are frequent events.

Miss Glaspell makes her home at Provincetown, Massachusetts.

A Word about the Play

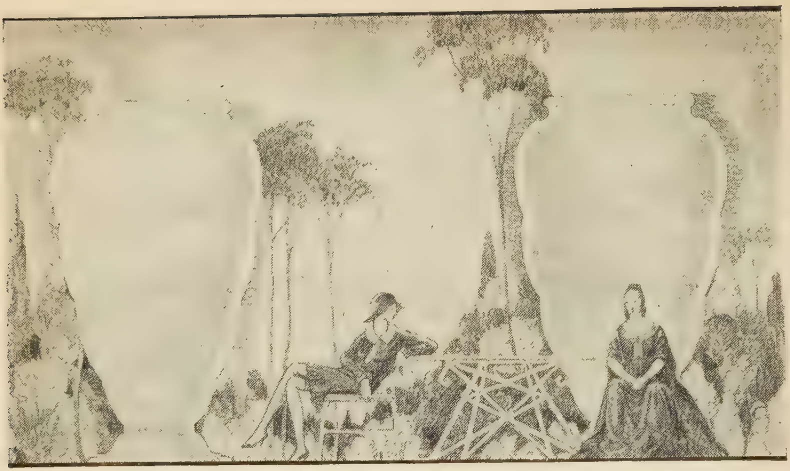
The sympathetic insight with which the two women reconstruct the elements of the tragedy makes this play effective with both readers and audiences. The bitter loneliness of rural life, the drudgery of farm toil, the motonony of bare existence robbed of any comforts or graces—all these have been packed into this little play by the skill and humanity of the author. Though we never see Minnie Wright, we have lived her life with her.

For Study and Discussion

How important is the setting in this play? What is the general atmosphere, or tone, of the play? How is this created? How can the actors sustain it? Has the title any ironic significance? Which are the better drawn—the men or the women characters? Observe the author's dramatic use of significant details—the canary, the preserves, the quilt, etc. Is there any special significance in the repeated statement that she was going to "knot it"? Can you project your imagination into the future and tell whether Mrs. Wright is acquitted—and why? Will Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters testify—and to what? Observe with what slight, but deft, touches the author has given us the background of the Wrights' thirty years of married life. Could these be indicated as economically in a short story, such as Miss Glaspell first intended?

For Further Reading

Before Breakfast	*Eugene O'Neill*
The Clod	*Lewis Beach*
The Tragedy of Nan	*John Masefield*
The Song of Solomon	*Mark O'Dea*
Uncle Jimmy	*Zona Gale*
Riders to the Sea	*John M. Synge*
Lonesome Like	*Harold Brighouse*
Fixin's	*Paul Green*



SQUARE PEGS *

A Rhymed Fantasy

CLIFFORD BAX

CHARACTERS

HILDA, *a modern girl*
GIOCONDA, *a fifteenth century Venetian*

SCENE: *A garden. Entrance right and left. Left, a table and two chairs. The general effect should suggest a little lawn which leads outward in several directions.*

The arrival of a taxicab is heard, off. Enter left, HILDA *in summer hat and dress and with a light cloak on her arm. She carries a folding-map and a small book.*

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Hilda. [*Speaking off, left.*] What's that? As certain as your name's Joe Billings
The taximeter points at fifteen shillings.
Well, and you've had a pound. What? Made a slip?
I thought five shillings was a handsome tip.
You want my father's home-address? "The Haven,
Chad Crescent, Baystead, North-West 57."
He'll write you out a check—I'm sure he will.
[*Sound of a motor-horn growing fainter.*]
The creature's gone. These taxi-men! But still—
At last I've found the Enchanted Garden. . . . Wait:
Suppose that isn't really Merlin's[1] Gate,
Nor this the garden where a girl who loathes
Our Twentieth Century (all except its clothes)
May turn the Book of Time to any page
And find herself back in a lovelier age?
The map will show. Yes, there's the gate, and there's
That wall, that table, these two empty chairs. . . .
Everything's right. How wonderful, how splendid,
To know that here the roar of time has ended!
Now, let me see. . . . [*Consulting her map.*]
If I should take that road
What century should I have for my abode?
"To Ancient Rome." Lovely! [*She starts to go out, right. Then stops.*]
It might be serious,
Though, if I chanced on Nero[2] or Tiberius.
The Romans had no manners. . . . This way here—
So the map says—would lead me to the year
Ten-sixty-six. I won't be such a fool
As go back where I stuck so long at school.
William the First[3] was always dull. I know

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[1] MERLIN—The Welsh wizard who acted as the counselor of King Arthur.

[2] NERO—Roman emperor whose name is a synonym for crimes of savage cruelty. Tiberius, his predecessor, has a reputation scarcely second to that of Nero.

[3] WILLIAM THE FIRST—The Norman duke who, by defeating the Saxons at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, established himself as king of England.

He'd make me listen to him—standing so,
With Bayeux[4] hands, knee crookèd, and neck bowed—
While he read all the Domesday Book[5] aloud.
I shan't go there. . . . Now, that's a pretty view! [*Referring to the map.*]
"The Eighteenth Century: Boswell[6] Avenue."
I might try that. But no—that won't do either.
I'd have to wear a wig or tell them why there,
Love coffee-houses more than trees and birds
And talk in such tremendously long words.
I know, I know! If I can find the way
I'll wander back into the sumptuous day
When, in his gardens near the warm lagoon,
Titian[7] gave feasts under the stars and moon.
That would be heavenly! Those were noble times.
There was a grandeur even about the crimes
Of people like the Borgias[8] . . . and their dresses,
And the sweet way they wore their hair in tresses,
And—oh, and everything! What was Titian's date?
I mustn't err into a time too late;
But how to make quite sure? I'll take a look
In this adorable fire-colored book—
Addington Symonds.[9] . . . Oh, that I knew more!
Was it in fifteen-sixty or before?

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[4] BAYEUX—A town in Normandy in whose library is preserved the famous tapestry depicting the Norman conquest of England. The tapestry contains 1,512 figures with Latin inscriptions and gives an exact picture of Norman costumes.

[5] DOMESDAY BOOK—The record of statistics about English lands. It was made by order of William, the Conqueror, and so called because it was considered to be as final as the judgments of Domesday, or Doomsday.

[6] BOSWELL—James Boswell, the biographer of Samuel Johnson. In the famous *Life of Johnson* Boswell reports minutely the acts and attitudes, not alone of his subject, but of his circle. In the social life of the eighteenth century the coffee house had an important place.

[7] TITIAN—Famous Venetian painter (1477–1576).

[8] BORGIAS—A famous Italian family of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They were noted alike for their artistic tastes and for the refinements of their cruelties.

[9] ADDINGTON SYMONDS—John Addington Symonds (1840–1893), English critic and essayist who is especially noted for his interpretation of the Italian Renaissance.

[*Settling herself in one of the chairs, she becomes absorbed in her book. Enter, right,* GIOCONDA *carrying two or three modern novels.*]

Gioconda. [*Speaking off, right.*] I thank you, gondolier.
You drowned my nurse
With true dramatic finish. Take this purse.
So— I am in that Garden where time speeds
Backward or forward as our fancy needs.
How sick I am of cloaks and ambuscades,
Of poison, daggers, moonlight serenades,
Of those dull dances that are all I get—
Pavane,[10] gavotte, forlana, minuet—
And the long pageant of our life at Venice!
Now, in the Twentieth Century there is tennis,
With cream and strawberries round a chestnut-tree,
And day-long idling in the June-blue sea,
And soda-fountains, too, and motor-cars,
And Henley Weeks[11] and Russian Ballet "stars."
Oh, what a wealth of joy that century has!
To think that I myself may learn to jazz!
Truly, I judge it has no slightest flaw—
The glorious age of Bennett, Wells, and Shaw.

[*She sets her books on the table and curtsies to them.*]

Gramercy[12] now—Shaw, Bennett, Wells, and Co.—
Since you have shown me what I longed to know,
How to behave, talk, play, and bob my hair
In nineteen-twenty, when at last I'm there.
Could I but find a guide! How shall I tell
Which road to follow? If I listen well
I ought to hear the roaring of their trains,
Their motor-horns, their humming monoplanes. . . .

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[10] PAVANE—A slow, stately dance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The gavotte is a lively dance, brisk yet dignified. The forlana was a Venetian dance. The minuet is a slow, graceful dance.

[11] HENLEY WEEKS—During the first week in July regattas are held at the Oxfordshire town of Henley-on-Thames.

[12] GRAMERCY—Many thanks. A corruption of French *grand merci*.

[*She listens intently for a moment.*]
The very bees are silent. . . . [*Seeing* HILDA.]
Who is that?
Surely, unless the books have lied, her hat
Came from "Roulette's," in Portman Square, West One!
A Twentieth-Century girl! The thing is done—
I need but ask her which way London lies. [*Kissing her hand, right.*]
Farewell, Rialto! Farewell, Bridge of Sighs!
[*She goes up to* HILDA *and curtsies ceremoniously.*]
Dear Signorina. . . . Signorina. . . . Deep
In Bennett's fragrant works, or can she sleep?
Could *The Five Towns*[13] have bored her? Let me try
Once more. Most noble Signorina. . . .
Hilda. [*Starting up.*] Why,
Who are you, lady? By your dress and ways
I think you must have come from Titian's days.
Gioconda. Indeed, I do. Old Titian! How he talks!
He did my portrait last July in chalks.
But grant me the great liberty, I pray,
Of asking what your name is. . . .
Hilda. Hilda Grey.
Gioconda. How sweet and to the point!
Hilda. And yours?
Gioconda. Gioconda
Francesca Violante Giulia della Bionda.
Hilda. It is a poem in itself. It shines
Like the soft sheen on Tasso's[14] velvet lines.
What can have led you to forego an age
When life was an illuminated page
From that superb romance?

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[13] *The Five Towns*—The name which Arnold Bennett has given to a district in Staffordshire whose chief industry is the making of pottery and of which Bennett has given us realistic pictures in many of his novels.

[14] TASSO—Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), the most brilliant Italian poet of the sixteenth century. His most famous poem is *Jerusalem Delivered,* an account of the capture of the Holy Sepulchre during the Third Crusade.

Gioconda. And what, I wonder,
Can have torn you and your rich time asunder?
Hilda. I'll tell you, for I'm sure you'll sympathize.
I have a lover. . . .
Gioconda. That is no surprise.
Hilda. And by the post this morning came a letter——
Gioconda. From him?
Hilda. From him.
Gioconda. What could have happened better?
Hilda. Ah! naturally you think that Harry writes
Of longing, suicide, and sleepless nights.
Did he, I'd read his letters ten times over—
But you don't know the Twentieth-Century lover.
Oh, for a man who'd write through tears, all swimmily,
And woo me with grand metaphor and simile!
I couldn't bear the slang that Harry used
In asking for my hand.
Gioconda. So you refused!
Hilda. Yes, and came here to seek a braver time.
Gioconda. How odd! I had a letter, all in rhyme,
Brought by a lackey to my father's gate
Just when dawn broke. As if I couldn't wait!
He dashed up, panting; and his horse's mouth
Was flecked with blood and foam. . . .
Hilda. [*Clasping her hands.*] The passionate South!
Gioconda. The fellow gave the letter, gasped, went red,
And straightway horse and lackey fell down dead.
I scanned the note, observed the flowery phrases
In which the writer smothered me with praises;
Compared them with the style of Bernard Shaw,
And told him briskly that he might withdraw.
Hilda. If I could see that letter!
Gioconda. So you shall,
Sweet friend—or, rather, right you are, old pal.
I'll read it. [*She produces a letter tied with rose-colored ribbon.*]

Hilda. Do! . . . I see his passion's flood
Demands red ink.
Gioconda. Oh dear, no—that's his blood.
Now, listen. Did you ever hear a style
Quite so absurd? I call it simply vile. [*Reading.*]
"Adored Gioconda—glittering star
Unsullied by the dusty world,
Rich rose with leaves but half uncurled,
New Venus in thy dove-drawn car—
Have pity: drive thy wrath afar.
Let Cupid's war-flag be unfurled,
Lest by thy gentle hand be hurled
The mortal bolt that leaves no scar.

"So prays upon his aching knee
Thy humble vassal, once the fear
Of Christendom, but now—woe's me!—
One whose wild prayers Love will not hear,
Who treads the earth and has no home—
Giulio Pandolfo, Duke of Rome."
Hilda. Gioconda, what a lover!
Gioconda. So I think—
His brain a dictionary, his blood mere ink.
Hilda. Oh, but I mean how fine a lover! Would
That mine could pen a letter half so good!
Gioconda. How does he write?
Hilda. Write! Would you deign to call
That "writing"—this illiterate blotted scrawl? [*Reading.*]
"Dear Hilda, if you buy *The Star*
To-night, you mustn't for the world
Suppose he got my hair uncurled—
That blighter who kyboshed the car.
He had the worst of it by far
Because the hood on mine was furled.
Good Lord! what steep abuse he hurled!
Yours, Harry—with a nasty scar.

"P. S.—The cut's above the knee,
And won't be right just yet, I fear.
Oh, and what price you marrying me?
Anything doing? Let me hear.
Ring up to-morrow, if you're home.
Where shall we do our bunk? To Rome?"
Now, wasn't that enough to make me mad?
It is a shame! It really is too bad!
"Dear Hilda"—plain "dear"! And what girl could marry
A man who, when proposing, ends "yours, Harry"?
Gioconda. I love his downright manner. In my mind
I see him, a tall figure; and, behind
His old two-seater. Yes, I see him plainly—
Close-cropped—
Hilda. Half bald.
Gioconda. Slow-moving—
Hilda. And ungainly.
Gioconda. A brow like H. G. Wells' my fancy draws,
An eye like Bennett's and a beard like Shaw's.
I know your Harry—just the English type,
A silent strong man married to his pipe,
With so few words, except about machines,
That he can never tell you what he means:
But were I his, and we two went a-walking,
What should that matter? I could do the talking.
Hilda. Surely you see, Gioconda, I require
A lover who can make love with some fire.
Gioconda. And I a lover so much overcome
By deep emotion that it leaves him dumb.
Hilda. No poetry? Then, so far as I can tell,
The Twentieth Century ought to suit you well. . . .
I've an idea!
Gioconda. What is it?
Hilda. This: that you
Show me how best you'd like a man to woo.
Gioconda. I will, I will!

Hilda. Imagine, then, that I
Am she for whom you say you'd gladly die.
This is my room at Baystead: that's the street:
You must come in from there—[*Leading her left.*]—and then we meet.

Gioconda. By Holy Church, a pretty sport to play!
God shield you, Signorina Hilda Grey! [*Exits left.*]

Hilda. Now—what's the time? It must be half-past four.
It is. I'll give him just one minute more.

[*Looking at herself in a pocket-mirror, and powdering her nose.*]

Goodness! I do look horrid. . . . Will he bring
An emerald or a pearl engagement-ring?
He comes! I'll take pearls as a last resort.

[*Enter, left,* GIOCONDA *carrying a pipe and a walking-stick.*]

Gioconda. Well, and how are you? In the pink, old sport?

Hilda. I'm glad to see you, Harry. Do sit down.

Gioconda. "Some" heat to-day, what? Even here. In town
Perfectly awful. Got a match?

[*She tries in vain to light the pipe from a match struck by* HILDA.] I say,
Old thing—you really look top-hole to-day.

Hilda. Well, naturally: I knew that you were coming.

[GIOCONDA *pulls at her pipe in silence, pokes the floor with her stick, and shifts it from hand to hand.*]

You're very quiet.

Gioconda. [*With a start.*] Oh! what's that you're thumbing?

[*Goes over to* HILDA *and looks over her shoulder.*]

Hilda. Addington Symonds.

Gioconda. Any good?

Hilda. Why—gorgeous!
You ought to read it—all about the Borgias.

Gioconda. What are they? Oh, I see! I had enough
Up at the 'Varsity of that sort of stuff.
I say—oh, blast the thing, this pipe's a dud!

[*She puts the pipe on the table.*]

Hilda. You smoke too much. They say it slows the blood,

And that you simply can't afford. [*Pause.*]
Gioconda. I say—
Hilda. Well, what?
Gioconda. You really look top-hole to-day.
Hilda. How nice! But flattery always was your wont.
[*Pause.*]
Gioconda. I say—
Hilda. That's just it, Harry dear—you don't.
Gioconda. I came to ask you something. . . . [*Producing a ring.*] Ever seen
A ring like this? Not a bad sort of green.
Hilda. [*Taking it.*] Emeralds! I worship emeralds. They enthrone
All the luxuriant summer in a stone.
Do let me just see how it looks! The third
Finger, I think, is generally preferred?
How splendid! Won't she be delighted?
Gioconda. Who?
Hilda. Your dear Aunt Kate.
Gioconda. I bought the thing for you.
Hilda. Harry!
Gioconda. You know—a what-d'you-call-it ring.
Hilda. Engagement?
Gioconda. That's the goods. And in the Spring
The parson gets our guinea. What about it?
Hilda. See, how it fits! I couldn't do without it.
Gioconda. Right-o! Then, that's that: good. But if you carry
A diary, jot down, "Next Spring, marry Harry"—
You might forget. You've got a diary?
Hilda. [*Bringing a small diary from her bag.*] Look—
I did blush—buying an engagement-book!
Gioconda. Well, how's the enemy? Good grief! what a shock!
D'you know, old bean, it's more than five o'clock?
Hilda. You'll have some tea?
Gioconda. Can't. Sorry. Told two men

I'd play a foursome with them at 5:10.
You'd better make the fourth.
Hilda. I really can't.
I've got some new delphiniums I must plant.
Gioconda. [*Going out, left.*] See you to-morrow, then.
Hilda. You'll drive me frantic
If you're not just the teeniest bit romantic!
Gioconda. It isn't done. You're absolutely wrong
In asking me to do that stunt. So long!
[*She tosses the pipe and stick off, left.*]
There! Did I play it well? You'd be my wife?
Hilda. [*Sighing.*] My dear, you played old Harry to the life—
His gaucherie.[15] . . .
Gioconda. His noble self-command . . .
Hilda. The way he shifts his cane from hand to hand . . .
Gioconda. A nervous trick that shows how much he feels . . .
Hilda. All I know is—I'd have a man who kneels
And pours out passion in a style as rippling
As the best Swinburne—or at least as Kipling.
Gioconda. Then I'll now be your lady. To your part—
Woo me as you'd be wooed!
Hilda. With all my heart!
[*Catching up her cloak, she flings it over her shoulder.*]
Last Miracle of the World, sainted, adored,
Divine Gioconda—hear me, I beg!
Gioconda. My lord—
Hilda. Dost know of passion? Is that heart so pure
As not to guess what torments I endure
Who for so long have sighed for thee in vain?
And wilt thou have no pity on my pain?
Wilt thou still spurn me as a thing abhorred
Whose only crime is to love thee?
Gioconda. My lord—
Hilda. Stay! I will brook no answer. For thy sake

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[15] GAUCHERIE—Awkwardness.

Did I not paint the town in crimson-lake?
Have I not wrenched thee through thy nunnery-bars?
And bear I not some ninety-seven scars
Taken as I fought my way to thy fair feet?
Think how thy relatives rushed into the street
To save thee—how I put them to the sword
And left them strewn about in heaps!
Gioconda. My lord—
Hilda. Had I a boy's light love when I, to win
Thy favor, cut off all thy kith and kin?
Run through the list! Measure my love by that!
Two great-grandfathers (one, I own, was fat);
Five brothers; fourteen uncles; half a score
Of nephews (and I dare say even more);
A brace of maiden-aunts; a second-cousin;
And family connections by the dozen.
Does it not melt that pitiless heart of ice
To see thyself secured at such a price?
Gioconda. My lord—
Hilda. Or if indeed thy heart requires
Flame fiercer than my love's Etnaean[16] fires—
Ask what thou wilt, but do not ask that I
Live on. Command me, rather, how to die.
Say in what style thou 'dst have me perish here,
So that at least my ardor win one tear!
Choose what thou wilt—I'll execute thy charge—
Nor fear to speak: my repertoire is large.
I can suspend myself upon a rafter;
Fall on my blade, and die with horrid laughter;
Leap from a height; read Bennett's books; or swallow
Poison—and, mark you, with no sweet to follow.
Gioconda. My lord—
Hilda. Thy choice is made?
Gioconda. My lord—

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[16] ETNAEAN—As if coming from Mt. Etna, a volcano in Sicily; hence, consuming, violent.

Hilda. Alack!
Gioconda. I have accepted thee ten minutes back.
Hilda. Then—I will deign to live. My castle stands
Four-towered among its olive-silvered lands.
Away! Away! Thou art all heaven to me!
[*She drags* Gioconda *right. They break.*]
Gioconda. Wonderful! That's Pandolfo to a tee!
Hilda. I should adore him!
Gioconda. And I Harry, too. . . .
If only you were I and I were you!
But soft! since here we stand beyond the range
Of Time, why don't we swop?
Hilda. You mean "exchange"?
Why not? We will! [*Moving quickly, right.*] May Titian's age enfold me!
Gioconda. Stop! Stop! You can't go yet. You haven't told me
Where I can find the Twentieth Century.
Hilda. [*Leading her front, and pointing to the audience.*] Then,
Behold its ladies and its gentlemen.
Gioconda. What lovely people! . . . All the same, you know,
They're not as I have pictured them.
Hilda. How so?
Gioconda. They're all so still. . . . And then—my fancy boggles
To see not one who's wearing motor-goggles!
How can I get among them?
Hilda. You must jump
Down there.
Gioconda. But that would mean a dreadful bump!
Hilda. You want to go from fifteen-sixty sheer
To nineteen-thirty. 'Tis a jump, my dear. . . .
And so—farewell! I come, I come at last—
O fire and sound and perfumes of the Past!
[*She goes out quickly, right.*]

Gioconda. Her eyes were green. However hard he tries,
Pandolfo never can resist green eyes.
I know he'll die for her and not for me.
Why did I let her go? It shall not be!
[HILDA *enters, right.*]
Hilda. It shall not be! Why did I let her go?
Harry will love her more than me, I know.
Gioconda!
Gioconda. Hilda!
Hilda. Somehow, after all,
I can't let Harry go beyond recall.
I think of his good heart: I know how proud
I'll be to watch him through a dusty cloud
When his new car, balanced upon one tire,
Rolls roistering through the lanes of Devonshire.
Gioconda. I, too, fair friend, perceive with sudden terror
The greatness of my momentary error.
I mustn't let you risk the enterprise. . . .
Pandolfo never could endure green eyes!
Hilda. Let us each make the best of her own age!
Gioconda. But sometimes you will write me—just a page?
Hilda. I will indeed. And you?
Gioconda. And so will I.
Hilda—farewell!
Hilda. Gioconda, dear—good-bye!
[*Standing in the middle of the stage, they take hands and kiss. Then they come to the front, left and right.*]
So ends our fantasy—the slight design
Arisen and gone like sound in summer trees,
Gioconda. The burden such as every mind may seize—
That in all centuries life is goodly wine!
Hilda. Which has the more of joy, her age or mine,
We leave you to determine as you please.
Gioconda. Mine has the painting-schools—The Sienese,[17]

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[17] SIENESE—The name given to certain Italian painters of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries whose activities centered around the city of Siena.

Venetian[18] and unchallenged Florentine.[19]
Hilda. Mine has the knowledge that our mortal pains
Are fleeing from the skilled physician's arts.
Gioconda. Mine the delight of unspoiled hills and plains,
Fair speech, adventure, and romantic hearts.
Hilda. And mine a sense that, by the single sun
That all men share, the world for man is one.

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[18] VENETIAN—The designation of a group of celebrated Italian artists who lived and worked in Venice in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

[19] FLORENTINE—Botticelli and Michael Angelo are perhaps the greatest of the Florentine group, or School, so called because their activities from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries centered around Florence.

Curtain

CLIFFORD BAX

THE STORY OF HIS LIFE

MR. BAX's interest in art and Italy—the names are almost synonymous—might be guessed from the reading of this delightful little fantasy, and is confirmed by the facts of his career.

He was born in England July 13, 1886, and first studied art, but later abandoned painting to take up literary and dramatic work. He has lived in Germany, Belgium, and Italy.

In 1929 he became chairman of the Incorporated Stage Society of London, the organization which has done so much to give a hearing to the works of less established dramatists.

Mr. Bax's first play to be produced in the commercial theatre was *The Poetasters of Ispahan* which was produced in 1912. Subsequent productions include *Polly,* with music by Frederick Austin, 1923; *The Insect Play,* adapted in collaboration with Nigel Playfair, 1923; *Midsummer Madness,* with music by Armstrong Gibbs, 1924; *Mr. Pepys,* a ballad opera depicting some incidents in the life of the Restoration diarist, with music by Martin Shaw, 1926; and *Waterloo Leave,* with music by Martin Shaw, 1928.

Mr. Bax is also the author (with H. F. Rubenstein, to whom *Square Pegs* is dedicated) of *Shakespeare,* a play based upon some of the little known facts of the great dramatist's life. He has also edited (and in part translated) four comedies by Goldoni, the famous Italian dramatist.

A Word about the Play

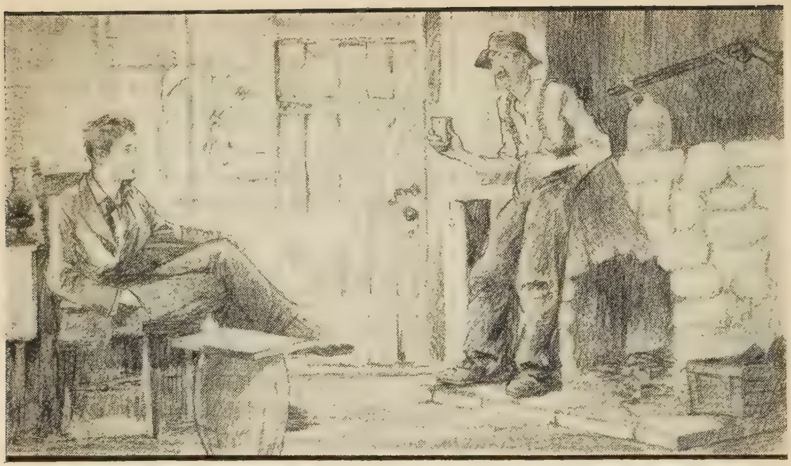
Originally described as a "rhymed fantasy for two girls," *Square Pegs* was later republished as a "polite satire." The satirical element is certainly subordinate to the fantastic. Here is a charming conceit expressed in graceful verse and played before a background which may be anywhere or nowhere. Its novelty, its delicacy, its dramatic contrast of manners all combine to make it a delightful play for both readers and audiences.

For Study and Discussion

Observe how briefly the setting is described. Is the author purposely indefinite, or does the setting not matter particularly? Would the play be equally effective without it? Is there any dramatic conflict of wills or purposes in the play? Does it need a well-read audience to appreciate it? How much contrast should there be in the costumes of the two girls? Should the verse be emphasized in any way when the play is read or presented? Does it add to the appeal of the play? Would the play have been equally effective in prose? What do you think would be the chief difficulties to be encountered in a presentation of the play? Which is the more modern of the two girls, Hilda or Gioconda? Does the epilog, in which the two actresses step out of character, add to the effectiveness of the play, or not? Compare with some of Shakespeare's plays which you have read.

For Further Reading

Mr. Pepys	*Clifford Bax*
The Piper	*Josephine Peabody*
The Blue Bird	*Maurice Maeterlinck*
Jazz and Minuet	*Ruth Giorloff*
Behind a Watteau Picture	*Robert Rogers*
Aria da Capo	*Edna Millay*
The Dark Lady of the Sonnets	*Bernard Shaw*
The Shoes that Danced	*Anna Branch*
A Minuet	*Louis N. Parker*



MOONSHINE *

A Melodrama

ARTHUR HOPKINS

CHARACTERS

LUKE HAZY, *moonshiner*
A REVENUE OFFICER

SCENE: *Hut of a moonshiner in the mountain wilds of North Carolina. Door back left. Window back right center. Old deal table right center. Kitchen chair at either side of table, not close to it. Old cupboard in left corner. Rude stone fireplace left side. On back wall near door is a rough pencil sketch of a man hanging from a tree.*

At rise of curtain a commotion is heard outside of hut.

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Luke. [*Off stage.*] It's all right, boys. . . . Jist leave him to me. . . . Git in there, Mister Revenue.

[REVENUE, *a Northerner in city attire, without hat, clothes dusty, is pushed through doorway.* LUKE, a *lanky, ill-dressed Southerner, following, closes door.* REVENUE'S *hands are tied behind him.*]

Luke. You must excuse the boys for makin' a demonstration over you, Mister Revenue, but you see they don't come across you fellers very frequent, and they allus git excited.

Revenue. I appreciate that I'm welcome.

Luke. 'Deed you is, and I'm just agoin' to untie your hands long nuff fer you to take a sociable drink. [*Goes to stranger, feels in all pockets for weapons.*] Reckon yer travellin' peaceable. [*Unties hands.*] Won't yer sit down?

Revenue. [*Drawing over chair and sitting.*] Thank you. [*Rubs wrists to get back circulation.*]

Luke. [*Going over to cupboard and taking out jug.*] Yessa, Mister, the boys ain't seen one o' you fellers fer near two years. Began to think you wus goin' to neglect us. I wus hopin' you might be Jim Dunn. Have a drink?

Revenue. [*Starts slightly at mention of* JIM DUNN.] No, thank you, your make is too strong for me.

Luke. It hain't no luck to drink alone when you git company. Better have some.

Revenue. Very well, my friend, I suffer willingly. [*Drinks a little and chokes.*]

Luke. [*Draining cup.*] I reckon ye all don't like the flavor of liquor that hain't been stamped.

Revenue. It's not so bad.

Luke. The last Revenue that sit in that chair got drunk on my make.

Revenue. That wouldn't be difficult.

Luke. No, but it wuz awkward.

Revenue. Why?

Luke. I had to wait till he sobered up before I give him his ticker. I didn't feel like sendin' him to heaven drunk. He'd a found it awkward climbin' that golden ladder.

Revenue. Thoughtful executioner.

Luke. So you see mebbe you kin delay things a little by dallyin' with the licker.

Revenue. [*Picking up cup, getting it as far as his lips, slowly puts it down.*] The price is too great.

Luke. I'm mighty sorry you ain't Jim Dunn. But I reckon you ain't. You don't answer his likeness.

Revenue. Who's Jim Dunn?

Luke. You ought to know who Jim Dunn is. He's just about the worst one of your revenue critters that ever hit these parts. He's got four of the boys in jail. We got a little reception all ready for him. See that? [*Pointing to sketch on back wall.*]

Revenue. [*Looking at sketch.*] Yes.

Luke. That's Jim Dunn.

Revenue. [*Rising, examining picture.*] Doesn't look much like any one.

Luke. Well, that's what Jim Dunn'll look like when we git 'im. I'm mighty sorry you hain't Jim Dunn.

Revenue. I'm sorry to disappoint you.

Luke. [*Turning to cupboard and filling pipe.*] Oh, it's all right. I reckon one Revenue's about as good as another, after all.

Revenue. Are you sure I'm a revenue officer?

Luke. [*Rising.*] Well, since we ketched ye climbin' trees an' snoopin' round the stills, I reckon we won't take no chances that you hain't.

Revenue. Oh.

Luke. Say, mebbe you'd like a seggar. Here's one I been savin' fer quite a spell back, thinkin' mebbe I'd have company some day. [*Brings out dried-up cigar, hands it to him.*]

Revenue. No, thank you.

Luke. It hain't no luck to smoke alone when ye got company. [*Striking match and holding it to* REVENUE.] Ye better smoke. [REVENUE *bites off end and mouth is filled with dust, spits out dust.* LUKE *holds match to cigar. With difficulty* REVENUE *lights it.*] That's as good a five-cent cigar as ye can git in Henderson.

Revenue. [*After two puffs, makes wry face, throws cigar on table.*] You make death very easy, Mister.

Luke. Luke's my name. Yer kin call me Luke. Make you feel as though you had a friend near you at the end—Luke Hazy.

Revenue. [*Starting as though interested, rising.*] Not the Luke Hazy that cleaned out the Crosby family?

Luke. [*Startled.*] How'd you hear about it?

Revenue. Hear about it? Why, your name's been in every newspaper in the United States. Every time you killed another Crosby the whole feud was told all over again. Why, I've seen your picture in the papers twenty times.

Luke. Hain't never had one took.

Revenue. That don't stop them from printing it. Don't you ever read the newspapers?

Luke. Me read? I hain't read nothin' for thirty years. Reckon I couldn't read two lines in a hour.

Revenue. You've missed a lot of information about yourself.

Luke. How many Crosbys did they say I killed?

Revenue. I think the last report said you had just removed the twelfth.

Luke. It's a lie! I only killed six . . . that's all they wuz—growed up. I'm a-waitin' fer one now that's only thirteen.

Revenue. When'll he be ripe?

Luke. Jes as soon as he comes a-lookin' fer me.

Revenue. Will he come?

Luke. He'll come if he's a Crosby.

Revenue. A brave family?

Luke. They don't make 'em any braver—they'd be first-rate folks if they wuzn't Crosbys.

Revenue. If you feel that way why did you start fighting them?

Luke. I never started no fight. My grandad had some misunderstandin' with their grandad. I don't know jes what it wuz about, but I reckon my grandad wuz right, and I'll see it through.

Revenue. You must think a lot of your grandfather.

Luke. Never seen 'im, but it ain't no luck goin' agin yer own kin. Won't ye have a drink?

Revenue. No—no—thank you.

Luke. Well, Mr. Revenue, I reckon we might as well have this over.

Revenue. What?

Luke. Well, you won't get drunk, and I can't be put to the trouble o' havin' somebody guard you.

Revenue. That'll not be necessary.

Luke. Oh, I know yer like this yer place now, but this evenin' you might take it into yer head to walk out.

Revenue. I'll not walk out unless you make me.

Luke. Tain't like I'll let yer, but I wouldn't blame yer none if yu tried.

Revenue. But I'll not.

Luke. [*Rising.*] Say, Mistah Revenue, I wonder if you know what you're up against?

Revenue. What do you mean?

Luke. I mean I gotta kill you.

Revenue. [*Rising, pauses.*] Well, that lets me out.

Luke. What do yu mean?

Revenue. I mean that I've been trying to commit suicide for the last two months, but I haven't had the nerve.

Luke. [*Startled.*] Suicide?

Revenue. Yes. Now that you're willing to kill me, the problem is solved.

Luke. Why, what d'ye want to commit suicide fer?

Revenue. I just want to stop living, that's all.

Luke. Well, yu must have a reason.

Revenue. No special reason—I find life dull and I'd like to get out of it.

Luke. Dull?

Revenue. Yes—I hate to go to bed—I hate to get up—I don't care for food—I can't drink liquor—I find people either malicious or dull—I see by the fate of my acquaintances, both men and women, that love is a farce. I have seen fame and preference come to those who least deserved them, while the whole world kicked and cuffed the worthy ones. The craftier schemer gets the most money and glory, while the fair-minded dealer is humiliated in the bankruptcy court. In the name of the law every crime is committed; in the name of religion every vice is indulged; in the name of education greatest ignorance is rampant.

Luke. I don't git all of that, but I reckon you're some put out.

Revenue. I am. The world's a failure . . . what's more, it's a farce. I don't like it but I can't change it, so I'm just aching for a chance to get out of it. . . . [*Approaching* LUKE.] And you, my dear friend, are going to present me the opportunity.

Luke. Yes, I reckon you'll get your wish now.

Revenue. Good . . . if you only knew how I've tried to get killed.

Luke. Well, why didn't you kill yerself?

Revenue. I was afraid.

Luke. Afreed o' what—hurtin' yourself?

Revenue. No, afraid of the consequences.

Luke. Whad d'ye mean?

Revenue. Do you believe in another life after this one?

Luke. I kan't say ez I ever give it much thought.

Revenue. Well, don't—because if you do you'll never kill another Crosby . . . not even a revenue officer.

Luke. 'Tain't that bad, is it?

Revenue. Worse. Twenty times I've had a revolver to my head—crazy to die—and then as my finger pressed the trigger I'd get a terrible dread—a dread that I was plunging into worse terrors than this world ever knew. If killing were the end it would be easy, but what if it's only the beginning of something worse?

Luke. Well, you gotta take some chances.

Revenue. I'll not take that one. You know, Mr. Luke, life was given to us by some one who probably never intended that we should take it, and that some one has something ready for people who destroy his property. That's what frightens me.

Luke. You do too much worryin' to be a regular suicide.

Revenue. Yes, I do. That's why I changed my plan.

Luke. What plan?

Revenue. My plan for dying.

Luke. Oh, then you didn't give up the idea?

Revenue. No, indeed—I'm still determined to die, but I'm going to make some one else responsible.

Luke. Oh—so you hain't willing to pay fer yer own funeral music?

Revenue. No, sir. I'll furnish the passenger, but some one else must buy the ticket. You see, when I finally decided I'd be killed, I immediately exposed myself to every danger I knew.

Luke. How?

Revenue. In a thousand ways. . . . [*Pause.*] Did you ever see an automobile?

Luke. No.

Revenue. They go faster than steam engines, and they don't stay on tracks. Did you ever hear of Fifth Avenue, New York?

Luke. No.

Revenue. Fifth Avenue is jammed with automobiles, eight deep all day long. People being killed every day. I crossed Fifth Avenue a thousand times a day, every day for weeks, never once trying to get out of the way, and always praying I'd be hit.

Luke. And couldn't yu git hit?

Revenue. [*In disgust.*] No. Automobiles only hit people who try to get out of the way. [*Pause.*] When that failed, I frequented the lowest dives on the Bowery, flashing a roll of money and wearing diamonds, hoping they'd kill me for them. They stole the money and diamonds, but never touched me.

Luke. Couldn't you pick a fight?

Revenue. I'm coming to that. You know up North they believe that a man can be killed in the South for calling another man a liar.

Luke. That's right.

Revenue. It is, is it? Well, I've called men liars from Washington to Atlanta, and I'm here to tell you about it.

Luke. They must a took pity on ye.

Revenue. I don't know—I'm too disgusted to think about it. I wandered around until I thought of you moonshiners . . . scrambled around in the mountains until I found your still. I sat on it and waited until you boys showed up, and here I am, and you're going to kill me.

Luke. [*Pause.*] Ah, so ye want us to do yer killin' fer ye, do ye?

Revenue. You're my last hope. If I fail this time I may as well give it up.

Luke. [*Takes out revolver, turns sidewise and secretly removes cartridges from chamber. Rises.*] What wuz that noise?

[*Lays revolver on table and steps outside of door.* REVENUE *looks at revolver, apparently without interest.*

LUKE *cautiously enters doorway and expresses surprise at seeing* REVENUE *making no attempt to secure revolver. Feigning excitement, goes to table, picks up gun.*]

Luke. I reckon I'm gettin' careless, leavin' a gun layin' around here that-a-way. Didn't you see it?

Revenue. Yes.

Luke. Well, why didn't you grab it?

Revenue. What for?

Luke. To git the drop on me.

Revenue. Can't you understand what I've been telling you, mister? I don't want the drop on you.

Luke. Well, doggone if I don't believe yer tellin' me the truth. Thought I'd just see what ye'd do. Ye see, I emptied it first. [*Opens up gun.*]

Revenue. That wasn't necessary.

Luke. Well, I reckon ye better git along out o' here, mister.

Revenue. You don't mean you're weakening?

Luke. I ain't got no call to do your killin' fer you. If ye hain't sport enough to do it yerself, I reckon ye kin go on sufferin'.

Revenue. But I told you why I don't want to do it. One murder more or less means nothing to you. You don't care anything about the hereafter.

Luke. Mebbe I don't, but there ain't no use my takin' any more chances than I have to. And what's more, mister, from what you been tellin' me I reckon there's a charm on you, and I ain't goin' to take no chances goin' agin charms.

Revenue. So you're going to go back on me?

Luke. Yes, siree.

Revenue. Well, maybe some of the other boys will be willing. I'll wait till they come.

Luke. The other boys ain't goin' to see you. You're a leavin' this yer place right now—now! It won't do no good. You may as well go peaceable; ye ain't got no right to expect us to bear yer burdens.

Revenue. Hang it all! I've spoiled it again.

Luke. I reckon you better make up yer mind to go on livin'.

Revenue. That looks like the only way out.

Luke. Come on, I'll let you ride my horse to town. It's the only one we got, so yu can leave it at Two Gun Jake's, and one o' the boys'll go git it, or mebbe I'll be goin' over myself.

Revenue. I suppose it's no use arguing with you.

Luke. Not a bit. Come on, you.

Revenue. Well, I'd like to leave my address so if you ever come to New York you can look me up.

Luke. 'Tain't likely I'll ever come to New York.

Revenue. Well, I'll leave it, anyhow. Have you a piece of paper?

Luke. Paper what you write on? Never had none, mister.

Revenue. [*Looking about the room, sees* JIM DUNN'S *picture on wall, goes to it, takes it down.*] If you don't mind, I'll put it on the back of Jim Dunn's picture. [*Placing picture on table, begins to print.*] I'll print it for you, so it'll be easy to read. My address is here, so if you change your mind you can send for me.

Luke. 'Tain't likely—come on. [*Both go to doorway*—LUKE *extends hand,* REVENUE *takes it.*] Good-bye, mister—cheer up. . . . There's the horse.

Revenue. Good-by. [*Shaking* LUKE's *hand.*]

Luke. Don't be so glum, mister. Lemme hear you laff jist onct before yu go. [REVENUE *begins to laugh weakly.*] Aw, come on, laff out with it hearty. [REVENUE *laughs louder.*] Heartier yit.

[REVENUE *is now shouting his laughter, and is heard laughing until hoof-beats of his horse die down in the distance.*

LUKE *watches for a moment, then returns to table—takes a drink—picks up picture—turns it around several times before getting it right—then begins to study. In attempting to make out the name he slowly traces in the air with his index finger a capital "J"—then mutters "J-J-J," then describes a letter "I"—mutters "I-I-I," then a letter "M"—muttering "M-M-M, J-I-M—J-I-M—JIM." In the same way describes and mutters D-U-N-N.*]

Luke. Jim Dunn! [*He rushes to corner, grabs shot-gun, runs to doorway, raises gun in direction stranger has gone—looks intently—then slowly lets gun fall to his side, and scans the distance with his hand shadowing his eyes—steps inside—slowly puts gun in corner—seats himself at table.*] Jim Dunn! —and he begged me to kill 'im!

Curtain

ARTHUR HOPKINS

THE STORY OF HIS LIFE

WHEN *The Poor Little Rich Girl*, that delightful and yet pathetic glimpse into the mind of a child, was first presented to the audiences of New York, Philadelphia and Boston, it was noted that it was produced by Arthur Hopkins. Hitherto unknown, Mr. Hopkins made his debut as a producer under most auspicious circumstances.

He has continued to present some of the most interesting plays of our time, and has given them such a richness of background and such intelligent and skillful direction as to mark him as one of the foremost of the producing managers. He is especially remembered for his productions of *The Jest, Richard the Third*, and *Hamlet* with John Barrymore in the leading rôles, and for the daringly different *Macbeth* with

Lionel Barrymore. Mr. Hopkins considers his production of the war play, *What Price Glory,* as his favorite among his recent productions.

Born in Cleveland in 1878 of Welsh-American parentage, Mr. Hopkins was educated at Western Reserve University in that city, and early chose the theatre as his profession. Although he has had no experience as an actor, he is generally acknowledged as one of the most sympathetic and expert of stage directors. He is also the author of *Burlesque,* a play of back stage life, which was filmed under the title of *The Dance of Life.* Of his one-act plays, *Moonshine* is perhaps the best known.

A Word about the Play

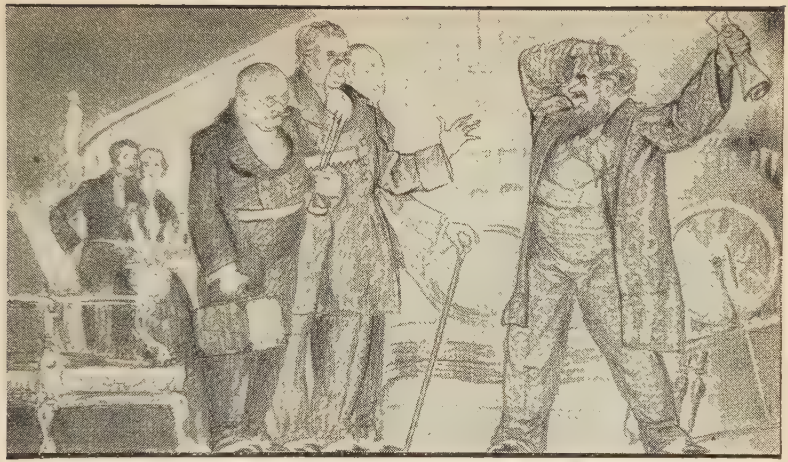
A game of wits with a man's life as the stake, played against a background of primitive folk-ways, constitutes the center of interest in this play. Here a single situation is exploited with much technical skill. Suspense is built up and maintained until very near the end of the play. The clash of character upon character make it something more than mere melodrama, however, and the humorous touches add to its effectiveness with audiences. Mr. Hopkins's own suggestion for its acting is summed up in the direction, "Be simple."

For Study and Discussion

Is the setting described with minute exactness? Does it need to be? What mountaineer customs and attitudes are described in the course of the play? Are these faithful to reality? Is the character of Luke exaggerated, or is it entirely plausible? Upon what emotions did Revenue play in order to outwit his captor? Which is the better drawn character, Luke or Revenue? Which would be the more difficult to play? Why? Did you guess the outcome of this duel of wits before the end of the play? If so, what sustained your interest? Does the dialect add to the effectiveness of the play?

For Further Reading

The Clod	*Lewis Beach*
The Last of the Lowries	*Paul Green*
Judge Lynch	*J. W. Rogers*
On Vengeance Height	*Allan Davis*
Hell-Bent fer Heaven	*Hatcher Hughes*
Sun-Up	*Lulu Vollmer*
This Fine Pretty World	*Percy MacKaye*



THE MAN WHO MARRIED A DUMB WIFE

A Satire-Farce

ANATOLE FRANCE

CHARACTERS

MASTER LEONARD BOTAL, *judge*
MASTER ADAM FUMÉE, *lawyer*
MASTER SIMON COLLINE, *doctor*
MASTER JEAN MAUGIER, *surgeon and barber*
MASTER SERAFIN DULAURIER, *apothecary*
GILES BOISCOURTIER, *Leonard Botal's secretary*
A BLIND MAN
CATHERINE, *Leonard Botal's wife*
ALISON, *Leonard Botal's servant*
MADEMOISELLE DE LA GARANDIÈRE
ATTENDANTS

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SCENE I

SCENE: *A large room in* JUDGE LEONARD BOTAL'S *house, at Paris. Left: Main entrance, from the rue Dauphine; when the door is open, vista to the Pont-Neuf.*[1] *Right: Door to the kitchen. At the rear of the stage: A wooden stairway, leading to the upper rooms. On the walls are portraits of magistrates, in gown and wig, and along the walls, great cabinets, or cupboards, full of books, papers, parchments, and bags of legal documents, with more piled on top of the cabinets. There is a double stepladder on casters, with flat steps on each side, used to reach the top of the cabinets. A writing table, small chairs, upholstered armchairs, and a spinning-wheel.*

GILES *is discovered sitting on a small form in front of the table; on the rise of the curtain he turns to the audience, bows in flamboyant*[2] *style, and then sits down again, with his back to the audience.*

The CHICKWEED MAN *goes by, calling:* "Chickweed![3] Chickweed! Good birdseed, good birdseed, good birdseed for saäle!"

Enter ALISON, *with a large basket under each arm. She curtsies to the audience.* GILES, *as soon as he spies her, runs to the street door and stands quiet beside it, so that she does not notice him. As she starts to enter the house, he jumps at her and snatches a bottle from one of the baskets.*

Alison. Don't you know better than to jump at anybody like a bogie-man, right here in a public place?

Giles. [*Pulling a bottle of wine out of the other basket.*] Don't scream, you little goose. Nobody's going to pluck you. You're not worth it.

[*Enter* MASTER ADAM FUMÉE. *He bows to the audience.*]

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[1] PONT-NEUF—Though literally the "new bridge," it is actually the oldest in Paris, as it was begun in 1578. It crosses the Seine at its widest point of 863 feet.

[2] FLAMBOYANT—Extravagant.

[3] CHICKWEED—A spreading herb with small white flowers. It is much used for feeding cage birds.

Alison. Will you let the Judge's wine alone, you rascal! [*She sets down her baskets, snatches back one of the bottles, cuffs the secretary, picks up her baskets, and goes off to the kitchen. The kitchen fire-place is seen through the half-open door.*]

Master Adam. [*Slightly formal in manner and speech at first.*] Is this the dwelling of Master Leonard Botal, Judge in civil and criminal cases?

Giles. [*With bottle behind his back, and bowing.*] Yes, sir; it's here, sir; and I'm his secretary, Giles Boiscourtier, at your service, sir.

Master Adam. Then, boy, go tell him his old school-fellow, Master Adam Fumée, lawyer, wishes to see him on business.

Giles. Here he comes now, sir.

[LEONARD BOTAL *comes down the stairs.* GILES *goes off into the kitchen.*]

Master Adam. Good day, Master Leonard Botal, I am delighted to see you again.

Leonard. Good morning, Master Adam Fumée, how have you been this long time that I haven't set eyes on you?

Master Adam. Well, very well. And I hope I find you the same, your Honour.

Leonard. Fairly so, fairly so. And what good wind wafts you hither, Master Adam Fumée?

[*They come forward in the room.*]

Master Adam. I've come from Chartres[4] on purpose to put in your own hands a statement on behalf of a young orphan girl. . . .

Leonard. Master Adam Fumée, do you remember the days when we were law students together at Orleans University?

Master Adam. Yes, yes; we used to play the flute together, and take the ladies out to picnics, and dance from morning to night. . . . But I've come, your Honour, my dear old school-fellow, to hand you a statement on behalf of a young orphan girl whose case is now pending before you.

Leonard. Will she give good fees?

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[4] CHARTRES—A cathedral town in northern France.

Master Adam. She is a young orphan girl. . . .

Leonard. Yes, yes, I know. But, will she give good fees?

Master Adam. She is a young orphan girl, who's been robbed by her guardian, and he left her nothing but her eyes to weep with. But if she wins her suit, she will be rich again, and will give plentiful proof of her gratitude.

Leonard. [*Taking the statement which* MASTER ADAM *hands him.*] We will look into the matter.

Master Adam. I thank you, your Honour, my dear old school-fellow.

Leonard. We will look into it, without fear or favour.

Master Adam. That goes without saying. . . . But, tell me: Is everything going smoothly with you? You seem worried. And yet, you are well placed here . . . the judgeship's a good one?

Leonard. I paid enough for it to be a good one—and I didn't get cheated.

Master Adam. Perhaps you are lonely. Why don't you get married?

Leonard. What, what! Don't you know, Master Adam, that I have just been married? [*They sit down on the form in front of the table.*] Yes, only last month, to a girl from one of our best country families, young and handsome, Catherine Momichel, the seventh daughter of the Criminal Court Judge at Salency. But alas! she is dumb. Now you know my affliction.

Master Adam. Your wife is dumb?

Leonard. Alas, yes.

Master Adam. Quite, quite dumb?

Leonard. As a fish.

Master Adam. And you didn't notice it till after you'd married her?

Leonard. Oh, I couldn't help noticing it, of course, but it didn't seem to make so much difference to me then as it does now. I considered her beauty, and her property, and thought of nothing but the advantages of the match and the happiness I should have with her. But now these matters seem less important, and I do wish she could talk; that would be a real intellectual pleasure for me, and, what's more, a practical advantage for the household. What does a Judge need most in his house? Why, a good-looking wife, to receive the suitors pleasantly, and, by subtle suggestions, gently bring them to the point of making proper presents, so that their cases may receive —more careful attention. People need to be encouraged to make proper presents. A woman, by clever speech and prudent action, can get a good ham from one, and a roll of cloth from another; and make still another give poultry or wine. But this poor dumb thing Catherine gets nothing at all. While my fellow-judges have their kitchens and cellars and stables and storerooms running over with good things, all thanks to their wives, I hardly get wherewithal to keep the pot boiling. You see, Master Adam Fumée, what I lose by having a dumb wife. I'm not worth half as much. . . . And the worst of it is, I'm losing my spirits, and almost my wits, with it all.

Master Adam. There's no reason in that, now, your Honour. Just consider the thing closely, and you will find some advantages in your case as it stands, and no mean ones neither.

Leonard. No, no, Master Adam; you don't understand. Think!—When I hold my wife in my arms—a woman as beautiful as the finest carved statue, at least so I think—and quite as silent, that I'm sure of—it makes me feel queer and uncanny; I even ask myself if I'm holding a graven image or a mechanical toy, or a magic doll made by a sorcerer, not a real human child of our Father in Heaven; sometimes, in the morning, I am tempted to jump out of bed to escape from bewitchment.

Master Adam. What notions!

Leonard. Worse yet! What with having a dumb wife, I'm going dumb myself. Sometimes I catch myself using signs, as she does. The other day, on the Bench, I even pronounced judgment in pantomime, and condemned a man to the galleys, just by dumb show and gesticulation.

Master Adam. Enough! Say no more! I can see that a dumb wife may be a pretty poor conversationalist! There's not much fun in talking yourself, when you get no response.

Leonard. Now you know the reason why I'm in low spirits.

Master Adam. I won't contradict you; I admit that your reason is full and sufficient. But perhaps there's a remedy. Tell me: Is your wife deaf as well as dumb?

Leonard. Catherine is no more deaf than you and I are; even less, I might say. She can hear the very grass growing.

Master Adam. Then the case is not hopeless. When the doctors and surgeons and apothecaries succeed in making the deaf-and-dumb speak, their utterance is as poor as their ears; for they can't hear what they say themselves, any more than what's said to them. But it's quite different with the dumb who can hear. 'Tis but child's play for a doctor to untie their tongues. The operation is so simple that it's done every day to puppies that can't learn to bark. Must a countryman like me come to town to tell you that there's a famous doctor, just around the corner from your own house, in Buci Square, at the Sign of the Dragon, Master Simon Colline, who has made a reputation for loosing the tongues of the ladies of Paris? In a turn of the hand, he'll draw from your wife's lips a full flood of mellifluous[5] speech, just as you'd turn on a spigot and let the water run forth like a sweet-purling brook.

Leonard. Is this true, Master Adam? Aren't you deceiving me? Aren't you speaking as a lawyer in court?

Master Adam. I'm speaking as a friend, and telling you the plain truth.

Leonard. Then I'll send for this famous doctor—and that right away.

Master Adam. As you please. . . . But before you call him in, you must reflect soberly, and consider what's it really best to do. For, take it all in all, though there are some disadvantages in having a dumb wife, there are some advantages, too. . . . Well, good day, your Honour, my dear old school-fellow. [*They go together to the street door.*] Remember, I'm truly your friend —and read over my statement, I beg you. If you give your just judgment in favor of the orphan girl robbed by her grasping guardian, you will have no cause to regret it.

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[5] MELLIFLUOUS—Smooth, flowing with honey.

Leonard. Be back this afternoon, Master Adam Fumée; I will have my decision ready.

[*They bow low to each other. Exit* MASTER ADAM.]

Leonard. [*At the door, calling.*] Giles! Giles! . . . The rogue never hears me; he is in the kitchen as usual, upsetting the soup and the servant. He's a knave and a scoundrel. Giles! . . . Giles! . . . Here, you rapscallion! You reprobate! . . .

[*Enter* GILES.]

Giles. Present, your Honour.

Leonard. [*Taking him by the ear.*] Sirrah! Go straight to the famous doctor, Master Simon Colline, who lives in Buci Square, at the Sign of the Dragon, and tell him to come to my house at once, to treat a dumb woman. . . .

Giles. Yes, your Honour. [*He starts off, running, to the right.*]

Leonard. Go the nearest way, not round by the New Bridge, to watch the jugglers. I know you, you slow-poke; there's not such another cheat and loafer in ten counties.

[GILES *comes back, slowly, across stage, and stops.*]

Giles. Sir, you wrong me. . . .

Leonard. Be off! and bring the famous doctor back with you.

Giles. [*Bolting off to the left.*] Yes, your Honour.

Leonard. [*Going up and sitting down at the table, which is loaded with brief-bags.*] I have fourteen verdicts to render to-day, besides the decree in the case of Master Adam Fumée's ward. And that is no small labour, because a decree, to do credit to the Judge, must be cleverly worded, subtle, elegant, and adorned with all the ornaments both of style and of thought. The ideas must be pleasingly conceived and playfully expressed. Where should one show one's wit, if not in a verdict?

[*The* WATERCRESS MAN *enters from the right and crosses to the left singing:* "Good watercress, fresh from the spring! Keeps you healthy and hearty! Six farthings a bunch. Six farthings a bunch." *When the* WATERCRESS MAN *is well on,* *enter the* Candle Man *from left to right, singing:* "Candles! Cotton-wick candles! Burn bright as the stars!" *While he is passing,* Catherine *enters from the upper stairway door; she curtsies to the audience and then sits on the window-seat, embroidering. As the street-cries die away* Leonard *looks up from his work at the table, and seeing* Catherine, *goes to her and kisses her as she rises to meet him. She makes a curtsy, kisses him in return, and listens with pleased attention.*]

Leonard. Good morning, my love. . . . I didn't even hear you come down. You are like the fairy forms in the stories, that seem to glide upon air; or like the dreams which the gods, as poets tell, send down to happy mortals. [Catherine *shows her pleasure in his compliments.*] My love, you are a marvel of nature, and a triumph of art; you have all charms but speech. [Catherine *turns away sobbing slightly.*] Shouldn't you be glad to have that, too? [*She turns back, intensely interested.*] Shouldn't you be happy to let your lips utter all the pretty thoughts I can read in your eyes? Shouldn't you be pleased to show your wit? [*She waves her handkerchief in glee.*] Shouldn't you like to tell your husband how you love him? Wouldn't it be delightful to call him your treasure and sweetheart? Yes, surely! . . . [*They rise.* Catherine *is full of pleased animation.*] Well, I've a piece of good news for you, my love. . . . A great doctor is coming here presently, who can make you talk. . . . [Catherine *shows her satisfaction, dancing gracefully up and down.*] He will untie your tongue and never hurt you a bit.

[Catherine's *movements express charming and joyous impatience.* A Blind Man *goes by in the street playing a lively old-fashioned country dance. He stops and calls out in a doleful voice:* "Charity, for the love of God, good gentlemen and ladies." Leonard *motions him away, but* Catherine *pleads for him by her gestures, indicating that he is blind.* Leonard *yields and goes back to his writing-table. She stands at the window listening while the blind man sings.*]

The Blind Man. There's lots of good fish in the sea,
La dee ra, la dee ra;
Now who will come and fish with me?
La dee ra, la dee ra;
Now who'll with me a-fishing go?
My dainty, dainty damsel, O!
Come fish the livelong day with me,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
And who will then be caught?—we'll see!
La dee ra, dee ra, day.

[*Toward the end of the verse* CATHERINE *glances at* LEONARD *and sees that she is unobserved; she steals to the street door as the* BLIND MAN *begins the second verse there; during this verse she dances to him and frolics around the stage as he sings.*]

Along the rippling river's bank,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
Along the wimpling[6] water's bank,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
Along the bank so shady, O
I met the miller's lady, O
And danced with her the livelong day,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
And oh! I danced my heart away,
La dee ra, dee ra, day.

[*The* BLIND MAN *stops playing and singing, and says, in a hollow and terrifying voice:* "Charity, for the love of God, good gentlemen and ladies."]

Leonard. [*Who has been buried in his documents and noticed nothing, now drives the* BLIND MAN *off the stage with objurgations.*] Vagabond, robber, ruffian! [*And throws a lot of brief-bags and books at his head; then speaks to* CATHERINE, *who has gone back to her place.*] My love, since you came downstairs, I haven't been wasting my time; I have sentenced fourteen men and six women to the pillory; and distributed, among seventeen different people—[*He counts up.*]—six, twenty-four, thirty-two, forty-four, forty-seven; and nine, fifty-six; and eleven, sixty-seven; and ten, seventy-seven; and eight, eighty-five; and twenty, a hundred and five—a hundred and five years in the galleys. Doesn't that make you realize the great power of a judge? How can I help feeling some pride in it?

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[6] WIMPLING—Rippling.

[CATHERINE, *who has stopped her work, leans on the table, and smilingly watches her husband. Then she sits down on the table, which is covered with brief-bags.*]

Leonard. [*Making as if to pull the bags from under her.*] My love, you are hiding great criminals from my justice. Thieves and murderers. But I will not pursue them, their place of refuge is sacred.

[A CHIMNEY SWEEP *passes in the street, calling:* "Sweep your chimneys, my ladies; sweep them clear and clean."

LEONARD *and* CATHERINE *kiss across the table. But, seeing the* DOCTORS *arriving,* CATHERINE *runs off up the stairs.*

Enter, in formal procession, GILES, *leading the line and imitating a trumpeter, then the two* DOCTORS' ATTENDANTS, *then* MASTER SIMON *and* MASTER JEAN. *The* ATTENDANTS, *one carrying the case of instruments, take their stand on either side of the door. The* DOCTOR *and* SURGEON *bow formally to the audience.*]

Giles. Your Honour, here's the great doctor you sent for.

Master Simon. [*Bowing.*] Yes, I am Master Simon Colline himself. . . . And this is Master Jean Maugier, surgeon. You called for our services?

Leonard. Yes, sir, to make a dumb woman speak.

Master Simon. Good! We must wait for Master Serafin Dulaurier, apothecary. As soon as he comes we will proceed to operate according to our knowledge and understanding.

Leonard. Ah! You really need an apothecary to make a dumb woman speak?

Master Simon. Yes, sir; to doubt it is to show total ignorance of the relations of the organs to each other, and of their mutual interdependence. Master Serafin Dulaurier will soon be here.

Master Jean Maugier. [*Suddenly bellowing out in stentorian tones.*] Oh! how grateful we should be to learnèd doctors like Master Simon Colline, who labour to preserve us in health and comfort us in sickness. Oh! how worthy of praise and of blessings are these noble doctors who follow in their profession the rules of scientific theory and of long practice.

Master Simon. [*Bowing slightly.*] You are much too kind, Master Jean Maugier.

Leonard. While we are waiting for the apothecary, won't you take some light refreshment, gentlemen?

Master Simon. Most happy.

Master Jean. Delighted.

Leonard. Alison! . . . So then, Master Simon Colline, you will perform a slight operation and make my wife speak?

Master Simon. Say, rather, I shall order the operation. I command, Master Jean Maugier executes. . . . Have you your instruments with you, Master Jean?

Master Jean. Yes, Master.

[*He claps his hands; the* ATTENDANTS *run forward into the room, and, each holding one side, they unfold the large cloth case of instruments and hold it up, disclosing a huge saw with two-inch teeth, and knives, pincers, scissors, a skewer, a bit-stock, an enormous bit, etc.*]

Leonard. I hope, sirs, you don't intend to use all those?

Master Simon. One must never be caught unarmed by a patient.

[*The* ATTENDANTS *fold up the case and give it to* MASTER JEAN; *then run back to their positions by the door, as* ALISON, *with a large tray, bottles, and glasses, enters from the kitchen.*]

Leonard. Will you drink, gentlemen?

[COLLINE *and* MAUGIER *take glasses from* ALISON *and drink, after* ALISON *has kissed* COLLINE'S *glass.*]

Master Simon. This light wine of yours is not half bad.

Leonard. Very kind of you to say so. It's from my own vineyard.

Master Simon. You shall send me a cask of it.

Leonard. [*To* GILES, *who has poured himself a glass full to the brim.*] I didn't tell you to drink, you reprobate.

Master Jean. [*Looking out of the window.*] Here is Master Serafin Dulaurier, the apothecary.

[*Enter* MASTER SERAFIN. *He trots across the stage, stopping to bow to the audience.*]

Master Simon. [*Peering into the street.*] And here is his mule! . . . Or no—'tis Master Serafin himself. You never can tell them apart. [MASTER SERAFIN *joins the group in the room.*] Drink, Master Serafin. It is fresh from the cellar.

Master Serafin. Your good health, my Masters!

Master Simon. [*To* ALISON.] Pour freely, fair Hebe.[7] Pour right, pour left, pour here, pour there. Whichever way she turns, she shows new charms. Are you not proud, my girl of your trim figure?

Alison. For all the good it does me, there is no reason to be proud of it. Charms are not worth much unless they are hidden in silk and brocade.

Master Serafin. Your good health, my Masters!

[*They* ALL *drink, and make* ALISON *drink with them.*]

Master Simon. Now we are all here, shall we go see the patient?

Leonard. I will show you the way, gentlemen.

Master Simon. After you, Master Maugier, you go first.

Master Maugier. [*Glass in one hand, case of instruments in the other.*] I'll go first, since the place of honour is the rear. [*He crosses to the left, and goes behind the table toward the door, following* BOTAL.]

Master Simon. After you, Master Serafin Dulaurier.

[MASTER SERAFIN *follows* MAUGIER, *bottle in hand.* MASTER SIMON, *after stuffing a bottle into each pocket of his gown, and kissing the servant,* ALISON, *goes up stage.*]

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[7] HEBE—In Greek mythology the goddess of youth and cupbearer to the gods on Mount Olympus.

Scene 2

Scene: *The setting is the same. Four or five hours have passed.* Leonard *is seated at the writing-table.* Master Adam *enters.*

Master Adam. Good afternoon, your Honour. How are you this afternoon?

Leonard. Well, fairly well. And how are you?

Master Adam. Well as can be. Excuse my besieging you, your Honour, my dear comrade. Have you looked into the case of my young ward who's been robbed by her guardian?

Leonard. Not yet, Master Adam Fumée. . . . But what's that you say? You've been robbing your ward?

Master Adam. No, no, never think it, your Honour. I said "my" out of pure interest in her. But I am not her guardian, thank God! I'm her lawyer. And, if she gets back her estate, which is no small estate neither, then I shall be her husband; yes, I've had the foresight to make her fall in love with me already. And so, I shall be greatly obliged to you if you'll examine her case at the earliest possible moment. All you have to do is to read the statement I gave you; that contains everything you need to know about the case.

Leonard. Your statement is there, Master Adam, on my table. I should have looked through it already, if I hadn't been so besieged. But I've been entertaining the flower of the medical faculty here. [*Suddenly seizing him by the shoulders and shaking him.*] 'Twas your advice brought this trouble upon me.

Master Adam. Why, what do you mean?

Leonard. I sent for the famous doctor you told me about, Master Simon Colline. He came, with a surgeon and an apothecary; he examined my wife, Catherine, from head to foot, to see if she was dumb. Then, the surgeon cut my dear Catherine's tongue-ligament, the apothecary gave her a pill—and she spoke.

Master Adam. She spoke? Did she need a pill, to speak?

Leonard. Yes, because of the interdependence of the organs.

Master Adam. Oh! Ah! . . . Anyhow, the main point is, she spoke. And what did she say?

Leonard. She said: "Bring me my looking-glass!" And, seeing me quite overcome by my feelings, she added, "You old goose, you shall give me a new satin gown and a velvet-trimmed cape for my birthday."

Master Adam. And she kept on talking?

Leonard. She hasn't stopped yet.

Master Adam. And yet you don't thank me for my advice; you don't thank me for having sent you to that wonderful doctor? Aren't you overjoyed to hear your wife speak?

Leonard. [*Sourly.*] Yes, certainly. I thank you with all my heart, Master Adam Fumée, and I am overjoyed to hear my wife speak.

Master Adam. No! You do not show as much satisfaction as you ought to. There is something you are keeping back—something that's worrying you.

Leonard. Where did you get such a notion?

Master Adam. From your face. . . . What is bothering you? Isn't your wife's speech clear?

Leonard. Yes, it's clear—and abundant. I must admit, its abundance would be a trial to me if it kept up at the rate which it started at.

Master Adam. Ah! . . . I feared that beforehand, your Honour. But you mustn't be cast down too soon. Perhaps this flood of words will ebb. It is the first overflow of a spring too long bottled up. . . . My best congratulations, your Honour. My ward's name is Ermeline de la Garandière. Don't forget her name; show her favour, and you will find proper gratitude. I will be back later in the day.

Leonard. Master Adam Fumée, I will look into your case at once.

[*Exit* MASTER ADAM FUMÉE. CATHERINE *is heard off stage singing the Blind Man's song;* LEONARD *starts, shakes his head, hurries to his writing-table, and sits down to work.* CATHERINE, *still singing, enters gaily, and goes to him at the table.*]

Leonard. [*Reading.*] "Statement, on behalf of Ermeline-Jacinthe-Marthe de la Garandière, gentlewoman."

Catherine. [*Standing behind his chair, and first finishing her song:* "La dee ra, dee ra, day," *then speaking with great volubility.*] What are you doing, my dear? You seem busy. You work too much. [*She goes to the window-seat and takes up her embroidery.*] Aren't you afraid it will make you ill? You must rest once in a while. Why don't you tell me what you are doing, dear?

Leonard. My love, I . . .

Catherine. Is it such a great secret? Can't I know about it?

Leonard. My love, I . . .

Catherine. If it's a secret, don't tell me.

Leonard. Won't you give me a chance to answer? I am examining a case and preparing to draw up a verdict on it.

Catherine. Is drawing up a verdict so very important?

Leonard. Most certainly it is. [CATHERINE *sits at the window singing and humming to herself, and looking out.*] In the first place, people's honour, their liberty, and sometimes even their life, may depend on it! and furthermore, the Judge must show therein both the depth of his thought and the finish of his style.

Catherine. Then examine your case and prepare your verdict, my dear. I'll be silent.

Leonard. That's right. . . . "Ermeline-Jacinthe-Marthe de la Garandière, gentlewoman. . . ."

Catherine. My dear, which do you think would be more becoming to me, a damask[1] gown, or a velvet suit with a Turkish skirt?

Leonard. I don't know, I. . . .

Catherine. I think a flowered satin would suit my age best, especially a light-coloured one, with a small flower pattern.

Leonard. Perhaps so. But. . . .

Catherine. And don't you think, my dear, that it is quite improper to have a hoop-skirt very full? Of course, a skirt must have some fullness . . . or else you don't seem dressed at all; so, we mustn't let it be scanty. The fashion won't last, I'm sure; some day the court ladies will give it up, and then every woman in town will make haste to follow their example. Don't you think so?

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[1] DAMASK—A rich silk fabric woven in elaborate patterns.

Leonard. Yes! Yes! But . . .

Catherine. Now, about high heels. . . . They must be made just right. A woman is judged by her foot-gear—you can always tell a real fine lady by her shoes. You agree with me, don't you, dear?

Leonard. Yes, yes, but . . .

Catherine. Then write out your verdict. I shan't say another word.

Leonard. That's right. [*Reading, and making notes.*] "Now, the guardian of the said young lady, namely, Hugo Thomas of Piédeloup, gentleman, stole from the said young lady her——"

Catherine. My dear, if one were to believe the wife of the Chief Justice of Montbadon, the world has grown very corrupt; it is going to the bad; young men nowadays don't marry; they prefer to hang about rich old ladies; and meanwhile the poor girls are left to wither on their maiden stalks. Do you think it's as bad as all that? Do answer me, dear.

Leonard. My darling, won't you please be silent one moment? Or go and talk somewhere else? I'm all at sea.

Catherine. There, there, dear; don't worry. I shan't say another word! Not a word!

Leonard. [*Writing.*] "The said Piédeloup, gentleman, counting both hay crops and apple crops . . ."

Catherine. My dear, we shall have for supper to-night some minced mutton and what's left of that goose one of your suitors gave us. Tell me, is that enough? Shall you be satisfied with it? I hate being mean, and like to set a good table, but what's the use of serving courses which will only be sent back to the pantry untouched? The cost of living is getting higher all the time. Chickens, and salads, and meats, and fruit have all gone up so, it will soon be cheaper to order dinner sent in by a caterer.

Leonard. I beg you. [*Writing.*] "An orphan by birth. . . ."

Catherine. Yes, that's what we're coming to. No home life any more. You'll see. Why, a capon,[2] or a partridge, or a hare, cost less all stuffed and roasted than if you buy them alive at the market. That is because the cook-shops buy in large quantities and get a big discount; so they can sell to us at a profit. I don't say we ought to get our regular meals from the cook-shop. We can do our everyday plain cooking at home, and it's better to; but when we invite people in, or give a formal dinner party, then it saves time and money to have the dinner sent in. Why, at less than an hour's notice, the cook-shops and cake-shops will get you up a dinner for a dozen, or twenty, or fifty people; the cook-shop will send in meat and poultry, the caterer will send galantines[3] and sauces and relishes, the pastry-cook will send pies and tarts and sweets and desserts; and it's all so convenient. Now, don't you think so yourself, Leonard?

Leonard. Please, please! [*He tries to write through the following speech, murmuring:*] "An orphan by birth, a capon by birth, an olla podrida,"[4] *etc.*

Catherine. It's no wonder everything goes up. People are getting more extravagant every day. If they are entertaining a friend, or even a relative, they don't think they can do with only three courses, soup, meat, and dessert. No, they have to have meats in five or six different styles, with so many sauces, or dressings, or pasties,[5] that it's a regular olla podrida. Now, don't you think that is going too far, my dear? For my part I just cannot understand how people can take pleasure in stuffing themselves with so many kinds of food. Not that I despise a good table; why, I'm even a bit of an epicure.[6] "Not too plenty, but dainty," suits my taste. Now, what I like best of all is capons' kidneys with artichoke hearts. But you, Leonard, I suspect you have a weakness for tripe and sausages. Oh, fie! Oh, fie! How can anyone enjoy sausage?

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[2] CAPON—A cock fattened for the table.

[3] GALANTINES—Cold chicken in jelly.

[4] OLLA PODRIDA—Any heterogeneous mixture.

[5] PASTIES—Meat pies.

[6] EPICURE—One who has developed a delicate taste in eating and drinking.

Leonard. [*His head in his hands.*] I shall go mad! I know I shall go mad.

Catherine. [*Running to the table behind him.*] My dear, I just shan't say another word—not a single word. For I can see that my chattering might possibly disturb your work.

Leonard. If you would only do as you say!

Catherine. [*Returning to her place.*] I shan't even open my lips.

Leonard. Splendid!

Catherine. [*Busily embroidering.*] You see, dear, I'm not saying another word.

Leonard. Yes.

Catherine. I'm letting you work in perfect peace and quiet.

Leonard. Yes.

Catherine. And write out your verdict quite undisturbed. Is it almost done?

Leonard. It never will be—if you don't keep still. [*Writing.*] "Item, One hundred twenty pounds a year, which the said unworthy guardian stole from the poor orphan girl. . . ."

Catherine. Listen! Ssh-sh! Listen! Didn't you hear a cry of fire? [*Leonard runs to the window, looks out, and then shakes his head at* CATHERINE.] I thought I did. But perhaps I may have been mistaken. Is there anything so terrifying as a fire? Fire is even worse than water. Last year I saw the houses on Exchange Bridge burn up. What confusion! What havoc! The people threw their furniture into the river, and jumped out of the windows. They didn't know what they were about; you see, fear drove them out of their senses.

Leonard. Lord, have mercy upon me!

Catherine. Oh! What makes you groan so, dear? Tell me, tell me what is the matter?

Leonard. I can't endure it another minute.

Catherine. You must rest, Leonard. You mustn't work so hard. It isn't reasonable. You have no right to . . .

Leonard. Will you never be still?

Catherine. Now, don't be cross, dear. I'm not saying a word.

Leonard. Would to Heaven!

[MADAME DE LA BRUINE, *followed by her footman, crosses the stage during the following speech.*]

Catherine. [*Looking out of the window.*] Oh! Here comes Madame de la Bruine, the attorney's wife! She's got on a silk-lined hood and a heavy puce-coloured[7] cape over her brocade gown. And she has a lackey with a face like a smoked herring. Leonard, she's looking this way; I believe she's coming to call. Hurry and arrange the chairs and bring up an armchair for her; we must show people proper respect according to their rank and station. She is stopping at our door. No, she's going on. She's gone on. Perhaps I was mistaken. Perhaps it was somebody else. You can't be sure about recognizing people. But if it wasn't she, it was somebody like her, and even very much like her. Now I think of it, I'm sure it was she, there simply couldn't be another woman in Paris so like Madame de la Bruine. My dear. . . . My dear. . . . Would you have liked to have Madame de la Bruine call on us? [*She sits down on his table.*] I know you don't like rattle-tongued women; it's lucky for you that you didn't marry her; she jabbers like a magpie; she does nothing but gabble from morning to night. What a chatterbox! And sometimes she tells stories which are not to her credit. [*Leonard, driven beyond endurance, climbs up on his step-ladder and sits on one of the middle steps, and tries to write there.*] In the first place, she always gives you a list of all the presents her husband has received. It's a dreadful bore to hear her tell them over. [*She climbs up on the other side of the double step-ladder and sits down opposite* LEONARD.] What is it to us, if the Attorney de la Bruine receives presents of game, or flour, or fresh fish or even a sugar-loaf?

Leonard. My head will burst! [*He takes refuge on top of one of the cabinets with his writing-case and papers.*]

Catherine. [*At the top of the ladder.*] And did you see my fine lady, who's really no lady at all, wearing an embroidered cape, just like any princess? Don't you think it's ridiculous? But there! Nowadays everybody dresses above his station, men as well as women. Your court secretaries try to pass for gentlemen; they wear gold chains and jewelry, and feathers in their hats; all the same, anyone can tell what they are.

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[7] PUCE-COLOURED—A dark brown or purple-brown in color.

Leonard. [*On top of his cupboard.*] I've got to the point where I can't answer for the consequences; I feel capable of committing any crime. [*Calling.*] Giles! Giles! Giles! The Scoundrel! Giles! Alison! Giles! Giles! [*Enter Giles.*] Go quick and find the famous Doctor in Buci Square, Master Simon Colline, and tell him to come back here at once for a matter far more needful and urgent than before.

Giles. Yes, your Honour. [*Exit.*]

Catherine. What's the matter, my dear? You seem excited. Perhaps the air is close. No? It's the east wind, then, don't you think?—or the fish you ate for dinner?

Leonard. [*Frantically gesticulating on top of his cupboard.*] *Non omnia possumus omnes.*[8] It is the office of servants to clean crockery, of mercers[9] to measure ribbon, of monks to pray, and of women to cackle and chatter like mad. Oh! How I regret, you saucy baggage, that I had your tongue loosed. Don't you worry, though—the famous doctor shall soon make you more dumb than ever you were.

[*He catches up armfuls of the brief-bags which are piled on his cupboard of refuge, and throws them at Catherine's head; she jumps nimbly down from the ladder and runs off in terror, crying:*]

Catherine. Help! Murder! My husband's gone mad! Help! Help!

Leonard. Alison! Alison!

[*Enter Alison.*]

Alison. What a life! Sir, have you turned murderer?

Leonard. Alison, follow her, stay by her, and don't let her come down. As you value your life, Alison, don't let her come down. For if I hear another word from her, I shall go raving mad, and God knows what I might do to her—and to you. Go! Off with you!

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[8] *Non omnia possumus omnes*—We cannot all do everything. Or, conversely, each has his appointed purpose.

[9] MERCERS—Dealers in cloth and silks.

[ALISON *goes upstairs.*]

Enter MASTER ADAM, MLLE. DE LA GARANDIÈRE, *and a* LACKEY *carrying a basket.* LEONARD *is still on top of the cabinet or book-case.* MASTER ADAM *and* MLLE. DE LA GARANDIÈRE *climb up on each side of the step-ladder. The* LACKEY, *with an enormous basket on his head, kneels in front, center.*]

Master Adam. Permit me, your Honour, with the object of softening your heart and arousing your pity, to present before you this young orphan girl, despoiled by a grasping guardian, who implores you for justice. Her eyes will speak to your heart more eloquently than my voice. Mlle. de la Garandière brings you her prayers and her tears; she adds thereunto one ham, two duck pies, a goose, and two goslings. She ventures to hope in exchange for a favouring verdict.

Leonard. Mademoiselle, you arouse my interest. . . . Have you anything to add in defence of your case?

Mlle. de la Garandière. You are only too kind, sir! I must rest my case on what my lawyer has just said.

Leonard. That is all?

Mlle. de la Garandière. Yes, sir.

Leonard. She knows how to speak—and to stop. The poor orphan touches my heart. [*To the* LACKEY.] Carry that package to the pantry. [*Exit* LACKEY. *To* MASTER ADAM.] Master Adam, when you came in, I was just drawing up the decree which I shall presently render in this young lady's case. [*He starts to come down from his cabinet.*]

Master Adam. What, up on that cupboard?

Leonard. I don't know where I am; my head is going round and round. Do you want to hear the decree? I need to read it over myself. [*Reading.*] "Whereas, Mlle. de la Garandière, spinster, and an orphan by birth, did fraudulently, deceitfully, and with injurious intent, steal, filch, and subtract from her lawful guardian, Squire Piédeloup, gentleman, ten loads of hay and eighty pounds of fresh-water fish, and whereas, there is nothing so terrifying as a fire, and whereas, the State's Attorney did receive . . ."

Master Adam. What in Heaven's name are you reading?

Leonard. Don't ask me. I don't know myself. I think my brains have been brayed in a mortar, for two hours running, by the very devil himself for a pestle. [*He breaks down and weeps on their shoulders.*] I'm a driveling idiot. . . . And all your fault, too, Master Adam Fumée. . . . If that fine doctor of yours hadn't restored my wife's speech . . .

Master Adam. Don't blame me, Master Leonard. I forewarned you. I told you right enough, that you must think twice before untying a woman's tongue.

Leonard. Ah, Master Adam Fumée, how I long for the time when my Catherine was dumb. No! Nature has no scourge more fearsome than a rattle-tongued female. . . . But I count on the doctors to recall their cruel gift. I have sent for them. Here's the surgeon now.

[*Enter* MASTER JEAN MAUGIER.]

Master Jean Maugier. Your Honour, I bid you good day. Here is Master Simon Colline coming forward upon his mule, followed by Master Serafin Dulaurier, apothecary. About him crowds the adoring populace: chambermaids, trussing[10] up their petticoats, and scullions[11] with hampers on their heads, form his escort of honour.

[*Enter* MASTER SIMON COLLINE *and* MASTER SERAFIN DULAUIER, *followed by* TWO APOTHECARY'S BOYS.]

Master Jean Maugier. Oh! how justly does Master Simon Colline command the admiration of the people when he goes through the city clad in his doctor's robe, his square cap, his cassock[12] and bands. Oh! how grateful we should be to those noble doctors who labour to preserve us in health and comfort us in sickness. Ohhhh! how . . .

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[10] TRUSSING—Fastening.

[11] SCULLIONS—Servants of low rank; pot cleaners.

[12] CASSOCK—A long close-fitting garment. Its somber color was sometimes relieved by bands of white linen at the throat.

Master Simon. [*To* MASTER JEAN MAUGIER.] Have done; 'tis enough.

Leonard. Master Simon Colline, I was in haste to see you. I urgently beg for your services.

Master Simon. For yourself? What is your disease? Where is the pain?

Leonard. No! For my wife; the one who was dumb.

Master Simon. Has she any trouble now?

Leonard. None at all. I have all the trouble now.

Master Simon. What? The trouble is with you, and it's your wife you want cured?

Leonard. Master Simon Colline, she talks too much. You should have given her speech, but not so much speech. Since you've cured her of her dumbness, she drives me mad. I cannot bear another word from her. I've called you in to make her dumb again.

Master Simon. 'Tis impossible!

Leonard. What's that? You can't take away the power of speech which you gave her?

Master Simon. No! That I cannot do. My skill is great, but it stops short of that.

[LEONARD *in despair turns to each of them in succession.*]

Master Jean Maugier. We cannot do it.

Master Serafin. Our greatest efforts would have not the slightest result.

Master Simon. We have medicines to make women speak; we have none to make them keep silence.

Leonard. You haven't? Is that your last word? You drive me to despair.

Master Simon. Alas, your Honour! [*He advances to the center, claps his hands for attention, and declaims.*] There is no elixir,[13] balm, magisterium,[14] opiate,[15] unguent,[16] ointment, local application, electuary,[17] nor panacea,[18] that can cure the excess of glottal activity[19] in woman. Treacle and orvietano[20] would be without virtue, and all the herbs described by Dioscorides[21] would have no effect.

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[13] ELIXIR—An aromatic preparation holding a small quantity of medicinal substance in solution.

[14] MAGISTERIUM—A precipitate formed by the mixture of two liquids differing in character.

[15] OPIATE—Sleeping potion.

[16] UNGUENT—Ointment.

Leonard. Can this be true?

Master Simon. Sir, you dare not so offend me as to doubt it.

Leonard. Then I am a ruined man. There's nothing left for me to do but tie a stone around my neck and jump into the Seine. [*He rushes to the window and tries to jump out, but is held back by the doctors.*] I cannot live in this hubbub. [*The doctors drag him back, set him down, and, with* MASTER ADAM, *stand in a circle in front of him.*] If you don't want me to drown myself straightway, then you doctors must find me some cure.

Master Simon. There is none, I tell you, for your wife. But there might be one for you, if you would consent to take it.

Leonard. You give me a little hope. Explain it, for Heaven's sake.

Master Simon. For the clack of a wife, there's but one cure in life. Let her husband be deaf. 'Tis the only relief.

Leonard. What do you mean?

Master Simon. Just what I say.

Master Adam. Don't you understand? That's the finest discovery yet. Since he can't make your wife dumb, this great doctor offers to make you deaf.

Leonard. Make me really deaf? Oh! . . . [*He starts to rise, but is pushed back by* MASTER SIMON, *who stands directly in front of him.*]

Master Simon. Certainly. I can cure you at once, and for all time, of your wife's verbal hypertrophy,[22] by means of cophosis.[23]

Leonard. By cophosis? What is cophosis?

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[17] ELECTUARY—A confection made by incorporating some medical substance with some sweet material, such as honey.

[18] PANACEA—A remedy supposed to cure all diseases.

[19] GLOTTAL ACTIVITY—Synonym for talkativeness.

[20] ORVIETANO—Supposed to be an antidote for poison. It was mixed with treacle, or syrup.

[21] DIOSCORIDES—A Greek botanist of the first and second centuries.

[22] VERBAL HYPERTROPHY—Another learned synonym for talkativeness.

[23] COPHOSIS—Medicalese for deafness.

Master Simon. 'Tis what is vulgarly called deafness. Do you see any disadvantages in becoming deaf?

Leonard. Certainly I do!

Master Jean Maugier. You think so?

Master Serafin. For instance?

Master Simon. You are a Judge. What disadvantage is there in a Judge's being deaf?

Master Adam. None at all. Believe me; I am a practicing lawyer. There is none at all.

Master Simon. What harm could come to justice thereby?

Master Adam. No harm at all. Quite the contrary. Master Leonard Botal could then hear neither lawyers nor prosecutors, and so would run no risk of being deceived by a lot of lies.

Leonard. That's true.

Master Adam. He will judge all the better.

Leonard. May be so.

Master Adam. Never doubt it.

Leonard. But how do you perform this . . .

Master Jean Maugier. This cure.

Master Simon. Cophosis, vulgarly called deafness, may be brought about in several ways. It is produced either by otorrhœa,[24] or by sclerosis[25] of the ear, or by otitis,[26] or else by anchylosis[27] of the ossicles. But these various means are long and painful.

Leonard. I reject them! . . . I reject them absolutely.

Master Simon. You are right. It is far better to induce cophosis by means of a certain white powder which I have in my medicine-case; a pinch of it, placed in the ear, is enough to make you as deaf as Heaven when it's angry, or as deaf as a post.

Leonard. Many thanks, Master Simon Colline; keep your powder. I will not be made deaf.

Master Simon. What? You won't be made deaf? What?

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[24] Otorrhœa—Flowing of the ear.

[25] Sclerosis—Hardening of the membrane of the ear.

[26] Otitis—Inflammation of the membrane of the ear.

[27] Anchylosis—Stiffening of the minute bones of the inner ear.

You refuse cophosis? You decline the cure which you begged for just now? Ah, 'tis a case but too common, and one calculated to make a judicious physician grieve, to see a recalcitrant[28] patient refuse the salutary medicament.[29]. . .

Master Jean Maugier. And flee from the cure, which would cure all his ailments. . . .

Master Serafin. And decline to be healed. Oh!

Master Adam. Do not decide too quickly, Master Leonard Botal; do not deliberately reject this slight affliction which will save you from far greater torment.

Leonard. No! I will not be deaf; I'll have none of your powder.

[ALISON *rushes in from the stairs, stopping her ears.*]

Alison. I can't stand it. My head will burst. No human creature can stay and listen to such a clatter. There's no stopping her. I feel as if I'd been caught in the mill-wheel for two mortal hours.

[CATHERINE *is heard off stage singing the blind man's song.*]

Leonard. Wretch! Don't let her come down. Alison! Giles! Lock her in.

Master Adam. Oh! Sir!

Mlle. de la Garandière. Oh! Sir, can your heart be so cruel as to want to lock the poor lady up all alone?

[CATHERINE *is heard singing again.* LEONARD *starts for the ladder, and climbs it as she enters.*]

Catherine. What a fine large assembly! I am your humble servant, gentlemen. [*She curtsies.*]

Master Simon Colline. Well, madam? Aren't you pleased with us! Didn't we do our work well in loosing your tongue?

Catherine. Fairly well, sirs; and I'm truly grateful to you. At first, to be sure, I could speak but haltingly, and bring out only a few words; now, however, I have some degree of facility; but I use it with great moderation, for a garrulous[30] wife is a scourge in the house. Yes, gentlemen, I should be in despair if you could so much as suspect me of loquacity, or if you could think for a moment that any undue desire to talk could get hold on me. [LEONARD, *on top of the cabinet, laughs wildly.*] And so, I beg you to let me justify myself here in the eyes of my husband, who, for some inconceivable reason, has become prejudiced against me, and taken it into his head that my conversation bothered him while he was drawing up a decree. . . . Yes, a decree in favour of an orphan girl deprived of her father and mother in the flower of her youth. But no matter for that. [*She crosses to the ladder and starts to go up one side of it.* LEONARD *climbs down the other side, goes first to one doctor, then to another, and finally sits down on the bench in front of the table.*] I was sitting beside him and hardly saying a single word to him. My only speech was my presence. Can a husband object to that? Can he take it ill when his wife stays with him and seeks to enjoy his company, as she ought? [*She goes to her husband and sits down beside him.. During the rest of the speech all those present, one after another, sink down in exhaustion at listening to her.*] The more I think of it, the less I can understand your impatience. What can have caused it? You must stop pretending it was talkativeness. That idea won't hold water one moment. My dear, you must have some grievance against me which I know nothing about; I beg you to tell me what it is. You owe me an explanation, and as soon as I find out what displeased you I will see to it that you have no reason to complain of the same thing again—if only you'll tell me what it is. For I am eager to save you from the slightest reason for dissatisfaction. My mother used to say: "Between husband and wife, there should be no secrets." And she was quite right. Married people have only too often brought down terrible catastrophes on themselves or their households just because they didn't tell each other everything. You must never have secrets, even for good reasons. My dear, you can speak freely before these gentlemen. I know I have done nothing wrong, so whatever you say can only prove the more clearly how innocent I am.

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[28] RECALCITRANT—Rebellious.

[29] SALUTARY MEDICAMENT—Health-giving cure.

[30] GARRULOUS—Talkative.

Leonard. [*Who has for some time been trying in vain by gestures and exclamations to stop* CATHERINE'S *flow of words, and has been showing signs of extreme impatience.*] The powder! Give me the powder! Master Simon Colline, your powder—your white powder!

Master Simon. Never was a deafness-producing powder more needed, that's sure. Be so kind as to sit down, your Honour. Master Serafin Dulaurier will inject the cophosis powder in your ears.

[*The doctors crowd about* LEONARD, *and inject the powder first in one ear and then in the other.*]

Master Serafin. Gladly, sir, gladly.

Master Simon. There! 'Tis done.

Catherine. [*To* MASTER ADAM FUMÉE.] Master Adam, you a lawyer. Make my husband hear reason. Tell him that he must listen to me, that it's unheard of to condemn a wife without letting her state her case, tell him it's not right to throw brief-bags at your wife's head—yes, he threw brief-bags at my head—unless you are forced to it by some very strong feeling or reason . . . Or no!—no, I'll tell him myself. [*To* LEONARD.] My dear, answer me, have I ever failed you in anything? Am I a naughty woman? Am I a bad wife? No, I have been faithful to my duty; I may even say I have loved my duty. . . .

Leonard. [*His face expressing beatitude, as he calmly twirls his thumbs.*] 'Tis delicious. I can't hear a thing.

Catherine. Listen to me, Leonard, I love you tenderly. I will open my heart to you. I am not one of those light, frivolous women who are afflicted or consoled by airy nothings, and amused by trifles. [*She puts her arms about him and they rock back and forth,* LEONARD *grinning from ear to ear.*] I need companionship. I need to be understood. That is my nature—I was born so. When I was only seven years old I had a little dog, a little yellow dog. . . . But you're not listening to me. . . .

Master Simon. Madam, he can't listen to you, or to anyone else. He can't hear.

Catherine. What do you mean he can't hear?

Master Simon. I mean just that. He can't hear, as the result of a cure he has just taken.

[*The* Blind Man *is heard again, playing the same air.*]

Master Serafin. A cure which has produced in him a sweet and pleasant cophosis.

Catherine. I'll make him hear, I tell you.

Master Simon. No, you won't, madam; it can't be done.

Catherine. You shall see. [*To her husband, affectionately.*] My dear, my beloved, my pretty one, my sweetheart, my better-half. . . . You don't hear me? [*She shakes him.*] You monster, you Herod, you Bluebeard.

Leonard. I can't hear her with my ears, but I hear her only too well with my arms, and with my shoulders and back.

Master Simon. She is going mad.

Master Maugier. She has gone mad! Stark staring mad!

Leonard. Oh! How can I get away? [Catherine *bites his neck.*] Oh! She has bitten me, I feel myself going mad, too.

[*The* Blind Man *has come forward, playing and singing the first verse of his song. Meanwhile* Catherine *and* Leonard *go singing and dancing about, and bite the others, who likewise go mad and sing and dance wildly, all at the front of the stage. The other characters of the play come in—the* Candle Man, Chimney Sweep, Madame de la Bruine, *etc.; all are caught and bitten, and join in the song and the dance, which resolves itself into the old-fashioned country "right and left," as they sing the second verse.*]

Along the rippling river's bank,
  La dee ra, la dee ra,
Along the wimpling water's bank,
  La dee ra, la dee ra,
Along the bank so shady, O
I met the miller's lady, O
And danced with her the livelong day,
  La dee ra, la dee ra,
And oh! I danced my heart away,
  La dee ra, dee ra day.

[*As* Leonard Botal *reaches the center of the front stage, the dance stops a moment for him to say to the audience:*]

Leonard. Good gentlemen and ladies, we pray you to forgive the author all his faults.

[*The dance re-commences, and as the curtain falls all dance off left or right, singing the refrain.*]

All. [*Diminuendo.*]

I danced with her the livelong day,
  La dee ra, la dee ra,
And oh! I danced my heart away,
  Le dee ra, dee ra day.

Curtain

ANATOLE FRANCE

The Story of His Life

Novelist and short story writer, essayist and commentator, philosopher and literary land mark, Anatole France enjoyed during his lifetime a position of literary eminence such as has been occupied by no other Frenchman since Voltaire. For thirty years his fame dominated French literature in the eyes of all the world. And while it is true that in the final period of his life his influence declined and his ideas were questioned, his style and the services rendered by him to the language were held in the same high esteem as before, and he himself was revered as a genius and a patriarch.

This brilliant career was humbly begun. As Jacques Anatole Thibault (the name France was a deliberately chosen pseudonym), he was born in Paris on April 16, 1844. As the son of a small bookseller, he had early opportunity to indulge that taste for reading which was to make him one of the most erudite of modern authors.

For a time, indeed, he seemed to prefer reading to writing, and needed the stimulus of success. This he obtained in 1881 with his first novel, *Le crime de Sylvestre Bonard,* pronounced delightful by the discriminating.

For years thereafter he poured out a series of lively, solid, graceful and profound works. As a story teller, in lucidity of thought and form, Anatole France is incomparable. In his style there is a sweetness and grace which distinguishes his phrases from those of any other writer. He had read and remembered much, but what he borrowed was changed and stamped with his own individuality. He was a deep admirer of classicism, so much so that his work contained the essentials of Greek and Latin wisdom. Above all, he was a profound student of human nature.

His death occurred at Tours, October 13, 1924.

A Word about the Play

This mad and merry farce, one of the very few dramatic productions from the pen of Anatole France, was begun for the entertainment of the members of the "Society of Rabelaisian Studies," a group of writers and scholars interested in the works of Rabelais, the great French satirist. It succeeded so well, however, that it was produced at one of the important Parisian theatres in the spring of 1912, and was brought to America in 1915 by Mr. Granville Barker, the English actor-manager.

It is founded on a brief passage in Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* wherein one of the characters speaks of having witnessed "the moral comedy of him who had espoused and married a dumb wife."

"The good, honest man, her husband," continues the commentator on the play, "was very earnestly urgent to have the fillet of her tongue untied, and would needs have her speak by any means. At his desire some pains were taken on her, and partly by the industry of the physician, other part by the expertness of the surgeon, the encyligotte which she had under her tongue being cut, she spoke and spoke again; yea, within a few hours she spoke so loud, so much, so fiercely, and so long that her poor husband returned to the same physician for a recipe to make her hold her peace. 'There are,' quoth the physician, 'many proper remedies in our art to make dumb women speak, but there are none that I could learn therein to make them silent. The only cure that I have found out is their husbands' deafness.' The wretch became within a few weeks thereafter, by virtue of some drugs, charms, or enchantments, which the physician had prescribed unto him, so deaf, that he could not have heard the thundering of nineteen hundred cannon at a salvo. His wife, perceiving that indeed he was as deaf as a doornail, and that her scolding was but in vain, sith that he heard her not, she grew stark mad."—From Sir Thomas Urquhart's translation.

It will be interesting to the student to note that, while the language is modern—almost colloquial—the author has succeeded perfectly in recreating the atmosphere of medieval times. The satire on talking women, physicians and surgeons, lawyers and judges is, of course, too sharp and pungent to need comment. Finally, the whole pageant of life in a Paris street passes before us so that we feel that we have actually lived for a season in that delightful city at the time when the Pont Neuf was really the new bridge.

For Study and Discussion

Note the description of the setting together with the adaptation of it. Enumerate the elements in the play—aside from the setting—which tends to produce the desired medieval atmosphere. Are the characters well drawn? Or are they mere puppets who are manipulated by the author? Which is the most carefully drawn character in the play? Which do you think would be the most difficult to play? Are the characters sufficiently differentiated?

At what point does the introduction to the play end? How has the author made us familiar with what has happened before the rise of the curtain? At what point is interest highest; that is, at what point does the play reach the climax? Is the ending satisfactory? What elements increase the artificiality of the play? Should these be preserved or discarded in the presentation?

Written Composition

Using the following data compose a one-act play, either humorous or serious, with an interesting movement of action.

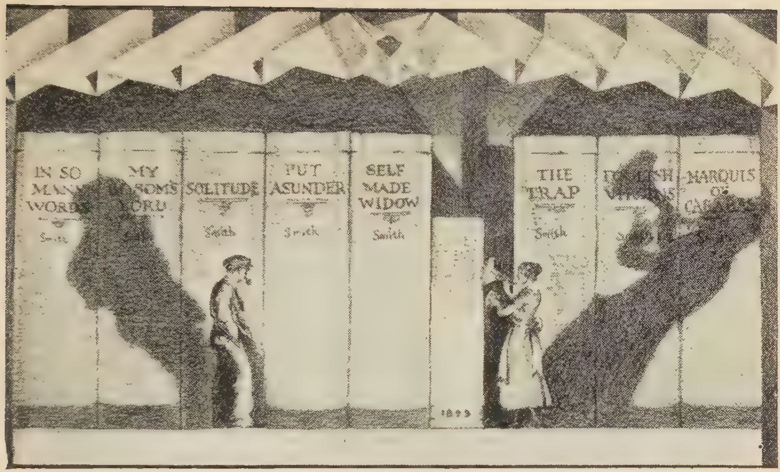
Setting: Geneva, Switzerland

Characters: Wilhelm Von Strassburgh, *a big, burly German doctor specializing in arthritis, whose only language of speech is German.*
Jeanne Marie, *his pretty little Parisienne wife, who can speak only French.*
Interpreter, *who is also a teacher of languages.*
Any other necessary minor characters.

The only common means of communication at the beginning of the play is the sign-language of the hands, eyes, and actions, or through the interpreter.

For Further Reading

The Doctor by Compulsion	*Moliere*
Master Pierre Patelin	*Author Unknown*
Gammer Gurton's Needle	*Author Unknown*
The Knight of the Burning Pestle	*Beaumont* and *Fletcher*
Rory Aforesaid	*John Brandane*
Comedy of Errors	*William Shakespeare*
A Chinese Lantern	*Lawrence Housman*
The Deacon's Hat	*Jeanette Marks*
The Importance of being Ernest	*Oscar Wilde*


IN SO MANY WORDS
MY BOSOM'S LORD
SOLITUDE
PUT ASUNDER
SELF MADE WIDOW
THE TRAP
MARQUIS OF
Smith
1893

ON THE SHELF

A Romantic Fantasy

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

CHARACTERS

LOVE POEMS, *the Author's first book*
THE MARQUIS
THE WIDOW
1ST VIRGIN
2ND VIRGIN
BOOZOM
THE NEW ONE
} *Characters in the Author's novels*
SMITH, *the Author*

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In regard to professional performance, the author may be addressed in care of the publishers.

SCENE: *The scene is on a shelf at a public library. When the curtain rises the audience sees a small section of this shelf enormously magnified: the books stand about ten feet high and three feet wide. The backs of eight volumes are visible; they should give the appearance of that dingy brown leather in which library volumes are rebound after seeing considerable service. On the back of each book the title and author's name are lettered in gilt; these inscriptions should be very large, so that the audience can read them easily. The volumes stand erect, tightly side by side, except that at one place there is a gap—evidently one of the books is "out."*

Projecting in front of the row of book-backs is a brown platform which represents the edge of the book-shelf. This must be raised a couple of feet above the floor of the stage proper, so that the characters may sit there.

In each of the book-backs, not noticeable by the audience until used, is built a small door (opening inward, so that no knob is necessary on the outside of the book) by which the characters may emerge from the volumes they inhabit. The titles of the volumes read thus from Right to Left: "IN SO MANY WORDS," "MY BOSOM'S LORD," "SOLITUDE," "PUT ASUNDER," "SELF MADE WIDOW," "THE TRAP," "FOOLISH VIRGINS," "MARQUIS OF CARABAS." *On each book the author's name is written as* SMITH.

When the scene is discovered there is a brief pause to allow the audience to apprehend the setting; then enters, through the gap in the line of books, LOVE POEMS. *She is a slender, dark-haired girl of nineteen or thereabouts, dressed in a simple summer muslin. She should have a rather old-fashioned air, for she is supposed to represent the fashion of 1899. She seems agitated, looks along the line of books as though measuring the space with her eye; tries to push some of the huge volumes closer together to make more room in the gap, cannot budge them, and stamps her foot with a gesture of half-angry despair.*

Love Poems. Oh, dear! It does seem too bad.

[*Enter, through the door in the volume marked* "MARQUIS OF CARABAS," *the* MARQUIS *himself. It is a polished but rather conceited figure, attired in the court dress of prerevolutionary France; the typical French nobleman of the costume novel. He makes her a distinguished bow.*]

Marquis. Bon jour, Mamselle.— Does anything fail you?

Love Poems. Of course, I'm used to being pushed away in the corner; but since the New One came I'm shoved out of sight altogether.

Marquis. [*Looks along the line.*] Dear me! Why, so you are. I hadn't noticed. Couldn't you get in there? [*Points to gap.*]

Love Poems. But if the New One comes in there won't be any room.

Marquis. He won't be in. He's one of the Six.

Love Poems. [*A little bitterly.*] I suppose so. Is he nice?

Marquis. Oh, he's all right of his kind. [*With self-esteem.*] Of course when I was published manners were different.— You mustn't be disrespectful to the Best Sellers, my dear. I was one myself, in my day. [*Takes snuff, with an air.*]

Love Poems. You darling!— Yes, Marquis, I know; but it's hard to be the only poetry in the works of a successful novelist.

Marquis. [*Obviously thinking more about himself than about her troubles.*] Well, my child, you would slip away from your own place on the Poetry shelves. Naturally, here among the popular fiction, there isn't much room——

Love Poems. I was so lonely there. I had to come. You understand, Marquis, even if the rest don't. I wanted to be near the others who had known him, even if they weren't exactly my kind.— It's hard to explain . . . but you see I was his first——

Marquis. [*A trifle impatiently.*] Yes, yes, Mamselle. But it's a little awkward—especially today—— [*He checks himself.*]

Love Poems. You really think I could squeeze in here without being pushed back right away? Oh, it's so long since any one took me out——

Marquis. I'm sure of it.

Love Poems. Then I will!

[*He watches her with a sort of pitying affection as she runs back into the darkness behind the gap. Then he taps gently with his cane at the door in the volume marked* "SELF MADE WIDOW." *A lady in stylish mourning of very modern mode, rather emphatically made up and excessively soignée, appears from the book.*

Widow. [*Breezily.*] Hullo, Mark! What's up?

Marquis. Madam, your adorer. [*He kisses her hand.*] Have you heard the news?

Widow. Don't tell me you're going into the movies? My dear old thing, that costume stuff is absolutely out.

Marquis. [*Gravely.*] The Author is dead.

Widow. My goodness! Smith?— [*Looks at her costume.*] Well, anyway, I won't have to buy mourning.

Marquis. We're going to be tremendously busy. There's to be a Memorial Edition, with new illustrations. You ought to see what the newspapers say. "The greatest popular romancer of his time." "Creator of enduring types of human frailty——"

Widow. New illustrations? Well, I hope they get a better artist this time. That other fellow never did me justice——

Marquis. And I'm going to be translated into French. Think of it, a chance to see Paris at last!— I always believed, you know, that I was one of his favourites——

Widow. Does Love Poems know? Poor kid, this'll hit her hard. You know she still takes Smith seriously——

Marquis. I didn't have the heart to tell her.—Besides, she won't get into the new edition. It's just the novels.

[*Enter, from the volume marked* "FOOLISH VIRGINS," *two typical young flappers.*]

1st Virgin. Hullo, Marky! Morning, Widow. What's all this about Smith croaking?

Marquis. Yes, *mes enfants,* our creator is dead. It is a Serious Loss to Literature.

1st Virgin. Good thing, too. He left us high and dry: bobbed hair, short skirts, rolled hose,—all that sort of thing. And now look at us. We're absolutely dated.

2nd Virgin. And the pleated skirts they're wearing in the new novels are simply corking.

Widow. Never mind. We're going into an Edition de Luxe.

1st Virgin. What ho! We'll get some decent quarters at last.

Marquis. I want to get a new snuffbox before we go to press. *Ma chérie,* may I escort you anywhere?

Widow. Well, Mark, if you're going toward the Avenue I need some stockings myself.

[MARQUIS *and* WIDOW *exeunt, left.*]

1st Virgin. Let's drag out old Boozom and kid him along.

[*They run over to volume* "MY BOSOM'S LORD" *and hammer on the door. It opens and there enters a Manly Man of the Richard Harding Davis era, in Virile War Correspondent garb: flaring riding breeches, polo shirt open at the collar, silk handkerchief knotted round throat, pith helmet, boots and spurs, revolver holster, field glasses slung over shoulder, very evident notebook and pencil.*]

2nd Virgin. Hullo, Boozom! How's the old Best Seller?

Boozom. I say, what's all the tumult? Have the Japs crossed the Yalu?[1]

1st Virgin. Worse, much worse.—Smith's dead.

Boozom. [*Takes his helmet off.*] He was a brave man.—By Jove, I must get this news off to the old sheet at once. Where's the nearest cable office?

[VIRGINS *cackle with enjoyment.*]

2nd Virgin. Boozom, you're priceless. I'll bet they fell for you hard in 1905.

1st Virgin. This way to the cable. You can blow us to a haircut for the new edition. [*They drag* BOOZOM *off, right.*]

[*There is a scuffling sound, and* LOVE POEMS *reappears in the gap, dragging her book. It is much smaller and thinner than the others—perhaps seven feet high and two feet wide:*

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[1] YALU—In the Russo-Japanese War.

mounted on small casters so that she can move it. Instead of the brown library binding it is coloured a dainty white and gold, with scrolls and gilt flowered-designs on the cover. It is lettered "LOVE POEMS—SMITH," *and at the bottom of the back-piece the date 1899. She is, with difficulty, pulling it into the opening, when the* NEW ONE *enters left. He is a well-dressed man of thirty, with an air of breeding and comfortable circumstances, but betrays a rather cynical assurance and self-certainty. He hastens to her assistance.*]

New One. Let me give you a hand. [*Pulls the book into line.*]

Love Poems. Thank you ever so much.—There: someone ought to be able to see me, if I don't get pushed back again. [*She darts inside the little volume, and reappears with a feather duster, with which she begins to dust the back of the book.*]

New One. [*Looking around.*] Where are all the rest of them?

Love Poems. Oh, you see there aren't ever more than a few on the shelf at once. The Smiths are so popular. That is, most of them are.

New One. [*Looking at her intently.*] Please don't think me rude; but have we ever met before?

Love Poems. [*Shyly.*] I—I don't think so. You see, I don't go out very much.

New One. But I believe we have. . . . I didn't exactly meet you, but I saw you. I remember where—in the mind of the Author.

Love Poems. What do you mean?—Good heavens!—Are you the New One? [*He bows.*] And I've been pushing myself into your place——

New One. Please don't give it a thought. I'm going to be terribly busy, I shan't be here at all. I just stopped in to look around.

Love Poems. [*In a low voice.*] And he still thinks of me?

New One. He did.

Love Poems. Did?

New One. Haven't you heard? He died this morning.

Love Poems. [*Slowly as though dazed.*] Dead. . . . [*Lets* *her duster fall and comes forward blankly.*] Oh, how cruel. And he never wrote it. [*She sits down on the edge of the shelf and buries her face in her hands.*]

New One. Look here, you mustn't be so upset. Think what a success he had. There's going to be a Limited Edition, too.

Love Poems. [*Vehemently and furiously.*] Oh, don't talk like that, I can't bear it. It is cruel. He never wrote the great book he used to dream about.

New One. Oh, I don't know. He did pretty well. Have you read—hem—have you read me?

Love Poems. [*With sudden hopefulness.*] Yes, perhaps I'm unfair. Tell me about the New One. And tell me about him. How was he when you were there?

New One. He seemed all right. Of course, I wasn't there very long. But Miss Edwards said she had never seen him more productive.

Love Poems. Productive . . . that's a queer word.—Who's Miss Edwards?

New One. His secretary. He used to dictate to her.

Love Poems. He didn't dictate when I knew him. You can't dictate poetry. Well, tell me about the story. Are you happy?

New One. Happy? My dear child, it's a modern novel.

Love Poems. Married?

New One. Well, yes, part of the time.

Love Poems. Any children?

New One. Really, that seems very irrelevant.

Love Poems. What's your wife like?

New One. Why, she's rather stunning; but I don't see her again after the Fourth Chapter. You see we're not exactly congenial——

Love Poems. I'm afraid you're not what he used to dream about. He talked of writing a book—oh, a big book, a book that would be generous and brave and understanding—a book that people would be glad to live in. Just look how he's botched it. [*Gestures to the books behind them.*] All these poor creatures, they aren't real at all. They're only unhappy caricatures, all pining to get out of their books because they don't feel genuine. They all imagine, poor dears, that if they were in one of the other books they'd be so much more comfortable. Look at the poor silly old Marquis, in that big book full of people and yet so lonely: lonely because he doesn't know what's the matter with him. And the Widow, locked up with that awful ex-husband of hers, eating her heart out to be in the same story with the Marquis. And all the rest of them, poor puppets. It wasn't fair. The Author took advantage of their helplessness.—Perhaps I'm in the wrong book myself. Perhaps I should have been written by someone else. Oh, why did he do it?

New One. I'm awfully sorry: you'll have to excuse me. They're waiting for me at the Circulation Desk—It's been a great pleasure, I'm sure. . . .

[*He bows himself out, left. During* Love Poems' *last speech a shy-looking little man of fifty, with spectacles, smoking a pipe, rather carelessly dressed in Norfolk jacket and cap, has wandered quietly in, right. This is* Smith, *the author. He is strolling along the line of books, with somewhat the air of one on a holiday. He quietly pushes open the doors in the book-backs and peeps inside, then closes them softly. He has reached the* "Love Poems" *volume before she notices him. He stands gazing absorbedly at it, puts out his hand as though to open the door, and then hesitates.* Love Poems, *seeing him, rises and hurries to pick up her duster.*]

Love Poems. I'm afraid it's a little dusty. I was just cleaning up.—Were you looking for anything special?

Smith. [*Politely pocketing his pipe and removing his cap; he looks at her sharply.*] I was looking for a good book.

Love Poems. What do you mean by a good book?

Smith. Well . . . an honest book. A . . . a comfortable kind of book. I'll tell you the truth. I've got a long holiday, and I want a book to live in.

Love Poems. [*Thoughtfully.*] I hope you'll choose the right one. You see, once they put you into a book you can't get out of it. You just have to make the best of it.

Smith. I want to find one where there'll be congenial company. Tell me about this man Smith. Are the books really worth while?

Love Poems. They've been very popular. But it isn't fair to ask me. I'm one of his people, you see, so I'm prejudiced.

Smith. Which story are you in?

Love Poems. I'm not a story at all. I'm poetry. I don't really count, I guess. I'm Out of Print. Most of his readers don't even know I exist.—I'd rather not talk about it, please. He died this morning, and I've only just heard. [*She dusts, to conceal her feelings.*]

Smith. [*After a pause.*] It's rather odd, your being here among the Fiction.

Love Poems. It isn't odd at all. I guess you don't know much about libraries. Why the shelves are just swarming with characters trying to get into the books where they feel they belong. Sometimes it's very embarrassing for the librarians. Becky Sharp,[2] for instance—did you know she fell in love with the Master of Ballantrae?[3] The other evening they found her on the Stevenson shelf. They had a terrible time hushing it up. She absolutely refused to leave the book. It was a scandal.

Smith. I don't blame Becky. I'd like to live in that book myself.

Love Poems. If Authors knew the heartburnings of people who are put into the wrong books, they'd be more careful.—Are you a character from a story?

Smith. I'm a character from a story that never got written.

Love Poems. Really? How thrilling! Do tell me about it. [*They sit on the edge of the shelf.*] Oh, if Smith had only written the book he always intended to write!

Smith. You seem to know a lot about Smith.

Love Poems. Why shouldn't I?—Do you know why I ran away from the Poetry shelf where I was lonely and forgotten? I wanted to be near those others whom he had created: to see if they were the beautiful living cratures he used to dream of.

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[2] BECKY SHARP—The heroine of Thackeray's realistic novel, "Vanity Fair."

[3] MASTER OF BALLANTRAE—A richly romantic story by Stevenson.

Smith. And were they?

Love Poems. No. They were poor images, phantoms, dolls dressed up in the passing fashion of the day. I was lonelier than ever, for I couldn't hear in them even an echo of him.

Smith. Perhaps he intended them to be that way. We all have to be ourselves, you know. We can't just be echoes of the Author.—Perhaps being an Author is harder than you think.

Love Poems. [*Thoughtfully and slowly.*] Perhaps it is.—Perhaps it is. Yes, it isn't fair. The Author has us at his mercy. He makes all the rules. We can't help ourselves.—You didn't tell me about the story you come from.

Smith. It's a story about a poet.

Love Poems. [*Eagerly.*] The nicest kind of story!

Smith. But he only wrote one book of poems, long ago. Then he wrote other things, novels, which were so successful he never went back to poetry.

Love Poems. That was cowardly.

Smith. Not necessarily. That little book of poems was a secret between him and the girl he wrote it for—the girl he put into the book.

Love Poems. But wasn't she lonely, if he never went back to her?

Smith. Secrets are always lonely. If a lot of people know about them, they're no longer secrets.

Love Poems. How does the story go on?

Smith. He put her into a book, and there she stayed: always young, always lovely, always unspoiled, just as she was when he first knew her.—Did you ever think, that is the only way a woman can keep young, by having a poet fall in love with her?

Love Poems. There aren't enough poets to go around.

Smith. Oh, yes, there are, if each one falls in love with enough women.

Love Poems. You're being cynical.—But what good does it do her if she stays young all alone? If he goes away and she never sees him again?

Smith. Let me finish. The poet invented pet names for her. He used to call her The Dark Lady of the Sonnets——

Love Poems. [*Fiercely.*] Don't tell me any more. You're tormenting me. Some of those odious people have been telling you about me. They all make fun of me and pretend to be sorry for me. Oh, I believe I'm glad he's dead. I wouldn't want to see him again. He went away and became Famous. I hate famous people. They belong to everybody. I wanted the boy, the boy who belonged only to me.

Smith. My dear . . . my everlasting dear . . . here he is.

[*She gazes at him, aghast; and then realizes it is indeed he. He puts his arm around her, and with a little sigh of contentment she silently puts her head down against his shoulder. Then, with a sudden revulsion she starts away and rises to her feet.*]

Love Poems. But this is impossible. You're dead.

Smith. [*Slowly and tenderly.*] My dear, when an author dies they punish him by making him go to live in one of his own books.—But they let him choose the one he likes best.

Love Poems. Oh, you must choose one of the novels. The Limited Edition is going to be wonderful, and you'll be more comfortable there. The old Marquis, for instance: he's such a darling, and very amusing company——

Smith. The Marquis? Pooh! I stole him straight from Dumas. No, my dear, there was another Limited Edition—very limited! How many copies was it? Five hundred?

Love Poems. Only three hundred.

Smith. That poet was only a boy, you know; and it wasn't great poetry. But perhaps I'm glad it wasn't because no one remembers it now but us. How did that one go? [*He recites from memory.*]

All lovely things conspire to greet
My lady: daisies at her feet
Sprang white, and wistfully implored
Her plucking; and with one accord
The sunsets for her smiles compete.
The stars . . . the stars. . . .

[*He pauses, trying to remember.*] Oh, I've forgotten it!

Love Poems. I know it. Haven't I lived with it all these years?

The stars in many a silver fleet
Cruise through the dark, in hopes to meet
Her eyes, that graciously reward
All lovely things. . . .

Smith. [*Eagerly.*] Yes! I remember now——

All gay and gentle thoughts entreat
Her favour and approval sweet:
She finishes, and makes complete
All lovely things.

[*Reflectively.*] Hmm. Rather juvenile! I believe I could do better now.

Love Poems. But my dear one—you can't afford to settle down forever in my poor little book. You're a Great Man now, and worse still, you're dead. You've got to be careful of your reputation. You belong in one of the novels, with the new introductions by critics.

Smith. I'd forgotten. I was thinking what fun we'd have rewriting those poems.

Love Poems. You sha'n't touch a word of them.

Smith. [*Looking at the line of books, a little wistfully.*] It would be fun to rewrite them all. I didn't realize before what it means to be dead. [*He takes her hand.*] Come, my dear. I know where I want to live.

[*He leads her to the door of the* "LOVE POEMS" *volume, and holds it open for her. But just as she is about to enter she turns and looks offstage.*]

Love Poems. Wait a moment! Here comes the Marquis and the Widow. They'll want to pay their respects to you.

Smith. Quick, let's get away before they see us!

[*She gives him a hasty kiss, and slips inside the book. He pauses just a moment on the threshold, gives a last look around, and then follows her in.*]

[*Enter* MARQUIS *and* WIDOW, *left. Both carry parcels, and are in high spirits.*]

Marquis. En bien, ma chérie, now we are all equipped for our new prosperity.

Widow. And Mark, you old rascal, you never told me that you are going to be Volume One in the De Luxe Edition.

Marquis. Enchanting child, I was always a special favourite of the Author's. I remember his saying that he prided himself particularly on me.

Widow. And we shall be next door to each other; for I'm going to be Volume Two.

Marquis. Ah, *bien adorée,* destiny is sometimes kind to those who have a gallant disposition. It will be strange indeed if there is not some opportunity— [*He sees the feather duster which* LOVE POEMS *has dropped just outside her volume.*] Ah, *pauvre petite,* she has been trying to brighten up her little book. She is so hoping to be included in the new edition. It is rather pathetic, *n'est-ce pas?*

Widow. Poor kid. Don't tell her about Smith passing out, Mark. She'll find it out soon enough when they put her back in the Poetry section. By the way, that's good news about the artist.

Marquis. My dear, no matter how great he is, he will do us no more than justice. The last thing the Author said was that if anything happened to him, he wanted us to be properly treated.

[*He leads her gallantly to the door of her volume, and waves the feather duster at her with a graceful gesture as the*

Curtain Falls

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

THE STORY OF HIS LIFE

Christopher Morley's public is perhaps not aware that he has wooed the theatre quite persistently in the course of his versatile career. His one-act pieces, especially *Thursday Evening*, seem to be especially popular with amateurs, even though he has taken a gentle fling at them in *The Rehearsal*. *East of Eden* and *Good Theatre* are both travesties in the accepted Morley manner. Mr. Morley's own dramatization of *Where the Blue Begins* has been experimentally produced, but so far does not seem to have been put in permanent form.

Christopher Morley was born in Haverford, Pennsylvania, May 5, 1890, and was educated there and at New College, Oxford, where he went as Rhodes scholar. He has held editorial positions with various magazines and publishing houses, but since 1924 has devoted himself solely to authorship, retaining only his genial conductorship of the column called "The Bowling Green" in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Mr. Morley is essayist, anthologist, novelist, poet, and playwright. But always, fortunately, he is his own inimitable self.

A Word about the Play

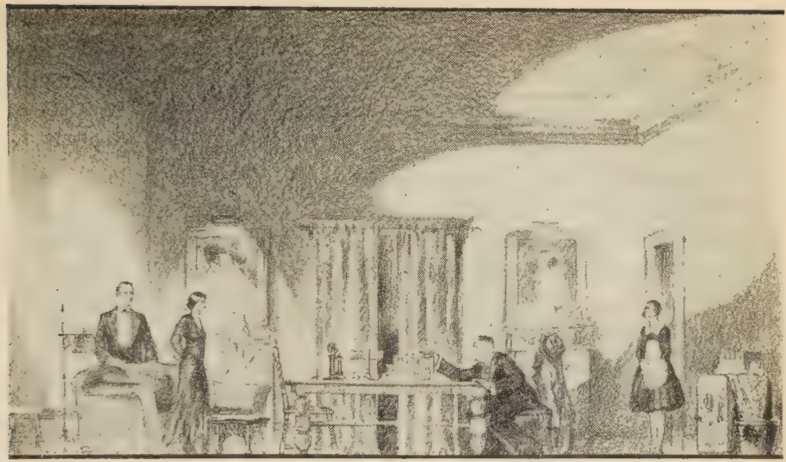
This is a fancy such as only Morley could write. Delicate, yet richly romantic, with a touch of wistfulness and satire, it is delightful entertainment. The contrasts in literary tastes, the gradual development of an author into a writer of best sellers, the attitudes of the different characters toward their creator—all these are the ingredients of a charming fancy flavored with a bit of philosophy.

For Study and Discussion

Note the description of the setting. How much does it contribute to the play? Is each of the characters sharply drawn? Are they characters or types? Is there any conflict of interest in this play? Do you think it would be successful with an audience, or is it merely intended to be read? How much of the business of authorship does it reveal? What is its particular atmosphere or tone? How can this be sustained? Does its interest lie in its situations, or in its dialog? Or in some other element?

For Further Reading

Bimbo the Pirate	*Booth Tarkington*
Overtones	*Maurice Baring*
The Aulis Difficulty	*Philip Moeller*
Helena's Husband	*Bertram Bloch*
Maiden over the Wall	*Alice Gerstenberg*
The Maker of Dreams	*Oliphant Down*
The Boy Comes Home	*A. A. Milne*
My Lady Dreams	*Eugene Pillot*
Caleb Stone's Death Watch	*Martin Flavin*



THE GRILL *

A Melodrama

George Woodruff Johnston

CHARACTERS

The Maid, *in appearance a quiet, efficient, well-trained servant, dressed in a black housemaid's uniform, with white collar, cuffs, and apron. At opening, she is enveloped in a black domino with hood.*

Trent, District Attorney, *a strong, handsome man, of the slender, supple type, about 35 years old. He wears a Tuxedo suit.*

Alice, his wife; *a pretty, emotional girl in the early twenties. She is dressed in an informal dinner gown.*

The Commissioner of Police, *a burly, thick-necked individual, about 45 years of age. He wears a loose, ill-fitting cutaway suit, and carries a light-weight overcoat and a soft felt hat.*

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SCENE: *The library of the District Attorney's apartment. There is a doorway at centre, closed by hangings, and a practical door up left. Down centre stands a large library table, with a telephone, and a book-rack—containing an upright row of books—upon it, and a chair at either side. At right, a davenport, with a small round table placed in front and a little to the left of it. Against the left wall, a safe and alongside of it a waste-paper basket, empty. On the wall at each side of the centre door, an electric push-button. Easy chairs, warm-toned rugs, books and magazines, give the room a comfortable, homelike appearance.*

Curtain rises on a pitch-black stage, with MAID, *unrecognizable in domino and hood, kneeling in front of safe. After a moment, she flashes an electric hand-lamp on combination and turns it back and forth, keeping her hand (without rings) well within the disc of light. She then opens safe door wide, throws light into its interior, and hurriedly examines its contents. While doing so, a telephone bell rings shrilly, and continues to ring at intervals. At first sound of bell,* MAID *switches off her lamp, slams safe door without turning combination, springs to her feet, and, switching on the flash-lamp again, makes with it a wide sweep from left to right, thus blinding eyes of audience while she makes a quick and silent exit through door up left, closing it softly behind her. She throws off her domino, and crosses offstage as quickly as possible to centre door.*

Trent. [*Offstage, calling.*] Mary!

[*Lights appear in hallway outside centre door, and* MAID *enters composedly through it. She presses wall-button on left of door, and all stage lights go on full-bright. She then goes down to library table and picks up telephone.*]

Maid. [*At telephone.*] Hello? . . . Yes, this is the District Attorney's apartment! . . . Just a moment, please!

[*As she turns to leave the room,* ALICE *enters the centre door, followed by* TRENT.]

Maid. Oh, Mr. Trent, the Commissioner of Police is downstairs.

Trent. [*Standing at library table, his back to* Alice, *lighting a cigarette. To* Maid.] Have him come right up, Mary.

Maid. [*At telephone.*] All right! Show the gentleman up, please!

[Maid *hangs up receiver, and begins to set room in order. Some of the newspapers lying about she folds neatly and replaces on library table; others she stuffs into waste-paper basket below safe.*

Alice, *on entering, has slowly crossed right, has picked up her sewing bag lying on small round table, and seated herself on davenport. During the foregoing she has sat there, lost in thought, her work forgotten in her lap.*]

Alice. [*Finally, to* Trent.] The Commissioner of Police?

Trent. [*Turns to face* Alice, *and leans against the table, smoking.*] Yes.

Alice. [*Slowly, thoughtfully.*] What does he want?

Trent. [*Casually.*] I asked him to come here to-night. I want him to go over the evidence in those graft cases with me.

Alice. [*Regretfully.*] Oh, how I wish you'd never had anything to do with them!

[*Door bell rings off.* Maid *pays no attention to bell, but picks up filled waste-paper basket and starts toward left door.*]

Trent. [*Eyeing* Maid *keenly.*] Never mind the basket, Mary! Go to the door! Don't keep the Commissioner waiting!

[Maid, *after a moment's reluctant hesitation, returns and replaces basket on floor below safe. Then she exits through centre door,* Trent's *gaze constantly fixed upon her.*]

Alice. [*After a glance over her shoulder to assure herself that* Maid *has left the room, rises and crosses to* Trent. *Anxiously, appealingly.*] Don't drag those grafters into court! Don't make enemies of them! Oh, I beg you! I beg you! They'd stop at nothing. I'm worried about you every minute! Drop the case, won't you? Please! . . . Please . . . for my sake!

[Commissioner *and* Maid *have appeared in hallway outside* *centre door. As she takes his hat and coat, they stand listening to* ALICE *and* TRENT.]

Trent. [*To* ALICE, *gently, reassuringly.*] Dear little girl! You mustn't worry about me! I know what I'm doing. Everything will turn out all right!

Maid. [*Standing just within centre door.*] Mr. Trent . . . the Commissioner of Police.

[ALICE *crosses dispiritedly to below round table.* COMMISSIONER *comes down to meet* TRENT. MAID *exits.*]

Trent. [*Advancing to meet Commissioner.*] Hello, Commissioner! I'm glad to see you.

[*They shake hands warmly.* TRENT *leads* COMMISSIONER *down to* ALICE.]

Trent. Let me introduce you to my wife.

Commissioner. [*Awkwardly, but heartily.*] Pleased to meet you, Mrs. Trent.

Alice. [*Polite, but preoccupied.*] Thank you.

Commissioner. [*After a slight, rather awkward pause, glances at his watch, then at* ALICE, *and finally, at* TRENT.] Well, Trent! I'm a busy man. The sooner. . . .

Alice. [*Interrupting, smilingly.*] I can take a hint, Commissioner. I know I'm in the way. [*She turns, gathers up her work, and searches about on round table and davenport for a thimble or misplaced object. For a time the lines read by the two men do not reach her consciousness.*]

Commissioner. [*His back to* ALICE *and facing* TRENT.] Well? How about this evidence? You think you've got 'em, do you?

Trent. Got them, Commissioner? Got them? [*Holds up a tightly clenched fist.*] I've got them like this! I've evidence enough . . . more than enough . . . to send a dozen of our city officials to the penitentiary!

Commissioner. [*Good humoredly.*] I don't envy you your job, just the same. Many a hot-headed young district attorney has gone to smash trying to do that very thing.

[ALICE *starts, pauses in her search, glances swiftly at* COM-

MISSIONER, *moves upstage behind davenport, and thereafter listens attentively to all that is said.*]

Trent. It may be. But wait till you see the evidence I have. I want to convince you. Then I want you to back me. I need your powers as Police Commissioner to uncover the big crooks . . . the ones who own City Hall! [*He starts toward safe.*]

Commissioner. Oh, that's it, is it? It's the men higher up you're after?

Trent. [*Halts at table and swings around to face* COMMISSIONER. *Forcibly, pounding table.*] Yes! And I'll get them yet. . . . I don't care who they are!

Commissioner. [*With the same rough good humor as before.*] You've come to the right shop, Trent. I'll help you all I can.

[*As* COMMISSIONER *turns toward chair at right of table, he observes* ALICE *listening to and watching him. Their eyes meet and hold an instant. Then he sits down.* ALICE, *on seeing that the* COMMISSIONER *has caught her eavesdropping, crosses to him at once.*]

ALICE. [*Smiling.*] Now, I really am going. Good-night, Commissioner!

Commissioner. [*Partly rising.*] Good-night, Mrs. Trent!

[*He sits again.* ALICE *starts toward center door.* TRENT, *at safe; to his apparent surprise, he finds it unlocked.*]

Trent. Alice! Wait, please. Have you been in the safe to-night?

Alice. [*Halting abruptly at door and facing* TRENT.] . . . I? . . . No. Why?

Trent. It's unlocked . . . open! [*He swings safe door open, and starts back as though thunderstruck.*] They're gone!

Alice. [*Crossing rapidly toward safe.*] Oh, Bob! What do you mean?

Trent. [*Rummages in safe; then rises and faces the others.*] Why . . . the papers . . . the evidence I've just been talking about! Letters; affidavits; everything . . . gone!

Commissioner. [*Crosses to safe.*] What? . . .

Trent. [*Bitterly.*] The very evidence I was going to present to the grand jury tomorrow! Now I haven't a leg to stand on! I'll be laughed out of court! [*He moves down stage, left, anxious, unstrung.*]

Commissioner. Say . . . that's fierce!

Alice. [*To* COMMISSIONER*; excitedly, appealingly.*] Can't you find them, Commissioner? Can't you do something?

Commissioner. [*After a moment's reflection; his gaze fixed on safe.*] When did you last see them, Trent?

Trent. Just before dinner. I brought them home from the office to show you and locked them up in the safe there.

Commissioner. Sure?

Trent. Positive.

Commissioner. Anything else missing: jewelry, money?

Trent. I never thought of money! [*He hurries upstage, takes a small japanned-tin box out of safe and hands it to* ALICE.] Alice, do you happen to remember how much you had in this box of yours?

Alice. [*Opens box and stares bewilderedly into it. Amazed, she breathes.*] Why . . . it's empty!

Commissioner. [*Taking box from* ALICE'S *hands and examining it.*] You had money in here, did you?

Alice. Yes. Some. But it wasn't mine. It belonged to the Red Cross.

[ALICE *sinks despondently into chair at left of table.* COMMISSIONER *crosses to safe; examines door, and tests combination.* TRENT *stoops and eagerly looks on.*]

Commissioner. This was a slick job. There isn't a mark or a scratch on the safe. [*Rising to his feet.*] Who, besides yourself, knew the combination, Trent?

Trent. My wife.

Commissioner. Anyone else?

Trent. No.

Commissioner. Did anyone know you put the papers in the safe?

Trent. Yes. I mentioned it to Mrs. Trent at dinner.

Commissioner. Tell anybody else?

Trent. No. Nobody.

Commissioner. [*Leans against safe, his hands in his pockets, his gaze fixed on* ALICE. *Finally, to* ALICE, *good-humoredly, reassuringly.*] Of course, Mrs. Trent; you couldn't have had any interest in the missing papers?

[ALICE, *nervous and anxious, makes no reply. A brief pause ensues.*]

Commissioner. [*His voice more business-like, his gaze fixed sharply on* ALICE.] Had you?

Alice. [*Rises, shrinks from* COMMISSIONER, *turns to* TRENT.] What does he mean? I don't understand.

Trent. [*To* COMMISSIONER, *good-naturedly.*] Of course, she hadn't! They did not concern her in the least!

Commissioner. [*Ignores* TRENT. *To* ALICE, *as before.*] How about that, Mrs. Trent?

Trent. [*Decidedly, but without anger.*] Listen, Commissioner! Mrs. Trent had no interest in those papers . . . none whatever! She knows nothing about their disappearance . . . absolutely nothing!

[*A slight pause. Then* COMMISSIONER *moves downstage and faces* ALICE directly.]

Commissioner. [*Insinuatingly.*] Are you sure you don't, Mrs. Trent?

Trent. [*Repressing his rising anger.*] Hold on, Commissioner! Please don't forget that you are talking to my wife!

Commissioner. [*Sarcastically.*] That's all right! But don't you forget that I'm an officer of the law in the presence of a crime! [*Sharply.*] Mrs. Trent, tell me! Just what was your interest? . . .

[ALICE *rises in alarm and crosses swiftly to a point below small round table.* TRENT *quickly joins her and lays his arm about her.*]

Trent. [*Forcibly.*] Stop right there! I won't have my wife grilled by you or any other man!

Commissioner. [*Satirically.*] That's so? Well, you wouldn't stop me doin' my duty just because a member of your family was involved, would you?

Trent. [*Starts toward* COMMISSIONER. *Angrily, but tense,* *not boisterous.*] I'll show you mighty quick what I'll do!

Alice. [*Stepping between the two men, and holding up her hands.*] Please . . . please!

Commissioner. [*Comes close and faces* TRENT. *Threateningly.*] So! You'd obstruct justice, would you? . . . you! . . . the District Attorney!

[*The two men stand glaring at each other for a moment. Then* TRENT, *with a gesture indicating defeat, turns and goes upstage. During the scene that follows, he stands in the background, his glance veering from one to the other, as question and answer pass back and forth between them.*]

Commissioner. [*Ignoring* TRENT *further; to* ALICE, *in a slow, even voice.*] Once more, Mrs. Trent. Did you have any interest in those papers, or not?

Alice. You heard what my husband said just now, didn't you . . . that they did not concern me in the least?

Commissioner. Never mind what your husband said! What do you say?

[ALICE *turns away making no reply.*]

Commissioner. What's the matter?

Alice. [*Confused.*] No! . . . Yes! . . . I mean. . . .

Commissioner. Well, what do you mean?

[ALICE, *her back to* COMMISSIONER, *keeps silent.*]

Commissioner. Want me to tell you? You were afraid to have your husband use this evidence. I heard you say so when I came in here. That's why you lifted the papers from the safe . . . tried to suppress them!

Alice. [*Much moved, turns and faces* COMMISSIONER.] I . . . I try to suppress them? I love my husband, Commissioner! Why should I seek to ruin him?

Commissioner. [*His cross-examination becomes sterner, more relentless. He never takes his eyes from* ALICE'S.] Well, what is it then? You were the only person who could open the safe, because you were the only one, besides Trent, who knew the combination! You went into it for something! For what? . . . Money?

Trent. [*Taking a step forward; tensely.*] Look here! . . .

Alice. [*Interrupting quickly.*] If I did, what then? I put the money there, didn't I?

Commissioner. But it wasn't yours.

Alice. [*Simply, but forcibly.*] That's true. But why should I have robbed the safe, when I'd have a perfect right to take the money out of it . . . here and now . . . right before your very eyes? [*Turns away, with an irritating little laugh.*] Don't be absurd, Commissioner!

Commissioner. [*Roughly, domineeringly.*] See here! You've squirmed out of every question I've asked you so far! What I want to know, is this: Did you, or did you not, enter the safe tonight? Answer me, Yes, or No!

Alice. [*With spirit.*] No! Most decidedly, No! Until just now, I haven't been in this room today!

Commissioner. [*After a moment's reflection, to Trent, curtly.*] I want to see your servants . . . first, the girl who opened the door for me!

[COMMISSIONER *sits down in chair at left of table, his back to the others.* ALICE *seats herself on davenport.* TRENT *goes upstage, pushes wall-button on right of centre door, and then returns to right side of centre table. Idly he handles books lying thereon, and straightens books in book rack, one of which is upside down. This done, he casually touches other articles on the table, and finally sits down in desk chair at right thereof. As he does so,* MAID *enters through centre door, and halts just within doorway. Throughout the ensuing scene, she plays the quiet, respectful servant. Her eyes, however, veer constantly toward the book rack.*]

Maid. Did you ring, Mr. Trent.

Trent. Yes. The Commissioner wants you.

Commissioner. [*Is facing left. Without turning, calls roughly.*] Come here!

[MAID *comes down to a point between table and safe, to left of* COMMISSIONER.]

Commissioner. [*As before.*] What's your name?

Maid. Mary. . . . Mary Evans, sir.

Commissioner. Well, Mary Evans, did you see Mrs. Trent in this room around dinner time?

Maid. No, sir.

Commissioner. Did you see anybody else?

Maid. No, sir . . . that is, nobody but Mr. Trent.

Commissioner. Oh, Mr. Trent, was it. [*He glances swiftly over his shoulder at* TRENT.] Where did he go when he left here? Did you notice?

Maid. To his room, I think, sir. [*Ingeniously.*] Didn't you, Mr. Trent?

Commissioner. [*Swinging about in his chair and confronting* TRENT, *who sits at his ease at the opposite side of the table, smoking.*] What did you do in your room, Trent?

Trent. [*Nonchalantly.*] Guess!

Commissioner. [*Nettled.*] What did you go there for? To hide something?

Trent. [*As before.*] Grilling me, now are you?

Commissioner. [*Commandingly, after a slight pause during which he has eyed* TRENT *searchingly.*] Suppose we take a look at that room of yours?

Trent. My room?

Commissioner. Yes!

Trent. [*Indifferently.*] All right, come along!

[TRENT *and* COMMISSIONER *exit in silence through centre door.* ALICE *rises nervously, follows them a few paces up right, and halts.* MAID *goes a little way up left. A pause while both women stand facing door, keyed up with anxiety as to what is happening beyond it. At length,* MAID *crosses right to* ALICE.]

Maid. [*Solicitously.*] What's the matter, Mrs. Trent?

Alice. [*Starts, lays her hand on* MAID'S *arm and leads her downstage. In a tense, low voice.*] Mary . . . are you sure . . . about Mr. Trent? Did he go to his room after he left this one?

Maid. Yes, ma'am!

Alice. [*In increasing anxiety and distress.*] Did Mr. Trent . . . did he carry . . . anything in his hand? He didn't, Mary . . . did he?

Maid. Yes, ma'am, he did! . . . Something rolled up . . . like a piece of paper. I didn't take particular notice what it was.

[TRENT *and* COMMISSIONER *re-enter through centre door.* TRENT *crosses right behind davenport, and stands leaning on the back of it.* ALICE *leaves* MAID *and waits expectantly, near round table.* MAID *retreats up right.*]

Commissioner. [*On entering, to* TRENT.] Well, that will require some explanation. [*He comes down to lower end of table. To* ALICE.] How much money did you have in the safe, Mrs. Trent?

Alice. [*Reluctantly, faintly.*] I think . . . let me see . . . about twenty-five hundred dollars.

Commissioner. [*Unrolls some bank notes he carries in his hand, and holds them out to* ALICE. *Impressively.*] Here's that amount exactly . . . rolled up in a Red Cross circular! [*With the bills in one hand, and the japanned-tin box in the other.*] This is the stuff you had in this box in that safe, isn't it?

Alice. [*Recoiling affrightedly.*] Where did you find it?

Commissioner. In your husband's room . . . hidden under the mattress of his bed!

Alice. [*Sinking onto davenport and covering her face with her hands. Passionately.*] No, no! I don't believe it!

[TRENT *comes around to right of davenport, and lays a comforting hand on her shoulder.* MAID *crosses to* ALICE *swiftly.*]

Maid. [*Earnestly.*] Oh, Mrs. Trent, I'm awfully sorry! If I'd only known. . . .

Commissioner. [*To* MAID, *roughly.*] Shut up, you!

[MAID *retreats up centre.*]

Commissioner. [*To* TRENT, *sneeringly.*] I got your number now, all right, Mr. District Attorney! Goin' to submit that evidence to the grand jury tomorrow, were you? Rats! Fact is when it came to a show-down, you got cold feet. And you faked this robbery to save your face. Then, you pinched the kale to make the people believe some ordinary yegg had tapped the safe and swiped the papers too!

Trent. [*Calmly.*] Robbed myself, did I? Is that what you think?

Commissioner. Yourself! Can that! Who collected this evidence, anyhow?

Trent. Under my direction . . . the District Attorney's office.

Commissioner. Who paid for doin' it?

Trent. The City, I suppose.

Commissioner. It did, all right! So it was not yourself you robbed, but the City. That's felony! [*Starts toward* TRENT.] And I arrest you for. . . .

Alice. [*Springs from davenport, crosses toward* COMMISSIONER, *and cuts in impetuously.*] No! No! I did it!

Trent. [*In amazement.*] You? . . .

Commissioner. [*With a self-satisfied grin.*] So! I was right in the first place. It was you who tapped the safe?

Alice. [*Breathlessly.*] Yes!

Commissioner. To keep your husband out of trouble?

Alice. [*Excitedly.*] Yes! Today I received an anonymous letter . . . threatening him. It said, if he did use this evidence . . . the gunmen . . . [*Covering her face with her hands, shuddering.*] Oh, I can't go on! [*She turns and takes a wavering step towards davenport, but is brought up short by the* COMMISSIONER'S *next line.*]

Commissioner. [*With gratified air of one who has solved a difficult problem, and now merely wishes to clear up a few details.*] But why did you plant the money in his room?

Alice. [*Hesitatingly.*] Why? Because . . . because . . . No, no! I didn't do that!

Commissioner. Who did, then? How did it get there?

Alice. [*Growing more and more confused and helpless.*] I've no idea!

Commissioner. [*Sarcastically.*] Oh, the money just walked into Trent's room, and went to bed by itself! That's what happened, was it?

[ALICE, *nervous and trembling, makes no reply.*]

Commissioner. [*Domineeringly, threateningly.*] Here! I'm tired of fooling! Come across! Come across, I tell you! Where are those papers?

[MAID'S *glance is fixed on book rack.* TRENT, *as unobtrusively as possible, moves up to a point to right of and a little behind her.*]

Alice. [*Breaking down entirely. Weakly, plaintively.*] Why . . . I don't know! I don't know where they are! [*Sinks despairingly onto davenport.*]

Trent. [*In quiet, unemotional tones.*] I know where they were . . . a minute ago.

[MAID *glances swiftly over her shoulder at* TRENT, *then at book rack; and before she can control herself, takes a hasty step towards it.*]

Commissioner. [*At lower left of table. Eagerly.*] Where?

TRENT. [*Nodding towards book rack.*] There!

[ALICE *rises. She and* COMMISSIONER *stare at* TRENT. MAID'S *gaze is fixed on book rack, and she shows signs of fright. A brief pause.*]

TRENT. [*To* MAID, *sternly, but without pointing to book rack.*] Get me those papers!

[MAID *remains silent and motionless.*]

TRENT. [*More forcibly.*] Get me those papers!

[MAID *begins to go to pieces. Her face twitches; she works her hands nervously; her glance veers swiftly from one to another of those watching her.*]

Maid. [*Tremulously.*] Papers? . . .

Trent. Yes! The papers . . . you hid between those books . . . when you tried to make your get-away!

Maid. [*As before.*] What . . . books? . . .

Trent. [*For the first time pointing to book rack.*] The books you have just been staring at! The books you've been watching every minute that you've been in this room!

Maid. I . . .

[TRENT *strides swiftly to right of table.* MAID *follows him anxiously as far as its upper end.* ALICE *crosses quickly to a point at the right of, and downstage from* TRENT. COMMISSIONER *moves hastily to left side of table. All eyes are fixed on* TRENT.]

Trent. [*Scatters books neatly piled in book rack, and seizes a jacket, stuffed with papers, hidden among them. He holds up the jacket for all to see.*] Here are the papers! [*Negligently, he tosses the jacket onto the table again.*]

Maid. [*Forcibly, but respectfully.*] Mr. Trent, I'm an honest woman! I didn't steal your papers! I had no idea where they were!

Trent. [*Calmly, amusedly.*] No? Why, you've given yourself dead away, Sadie!

Maid. [*Alarmed, flinches. Quaveringly.*] Sadie! . . . My name isn't Sadie!

Trent. [*Pulling from his pocket a photograph, with writing on the back of it, and holding it out to* MAID.] It isn't? Sure? Well, here's a picture and description of "Combination Sadie" the wisest little safe-worker in the country . . . and they both fit you to a dot!

Alice. [*Taking a step near. In stupefaction.*] Mary! . . . You! [*A slight pause.*] Oh, now I see! You took the papers from the safe, and put the money in my husband's room to cast suspicion on him.

Trent. [*Reading from back of photograph.*] "Combination Sadie" has a scar on her right shoulder from a healed bullet-wound. It's shaped like a three-pointed star. . . .

[TRENT *advances toward* MAID, *as if about to examine her shoulder. She, in alarm, grasps her waist at neck, and retreats up left before him. He stops his pursuit and turns to the others.*]

Trent. [*Laughingly.*] See! She's given herself away again!

Commissioner. [*To* TRENT, *roughly.*] Hold on! What are you after? Your wife's already confessed.

Trent. [*Moves toward* ALICE *at right, and lays an affection-*

ate arm about her.] That's right! She did. But it was to a crime she'd never committed. She was trying to shield me. That's the kind of a little wife she is! [*Commandingly; pointing to* MAID.] Commissioner, now that you have a duty to do, do it! I charge that crook with burglarizing my safe! Telephone an officer!

[COMMISSIONER *neither moves, nor speaks.*]

Trent. [*More strongly.*] Telephone for an officer!

[COMMISSIONER, *slowly and reluctantly crosses to table. Only after further hesitation and delay does he take up instrument. Finally, he speaks into telephone in a low voice from which the brag and bluster have vanished.*]

Commissioner. Spring . . . six-thousand. . . .

Maid. [*Dashes at* COMMISSIONER. *Snatches telephone from his hands and flings it violently to the floor. Furiously.*] Don't you dare to double cross me! Who got me the job in this house? Who put me here to pinch all the evidence against those grafters I could lay my hands on? It was you . . . you . . . the rottenest grafter in the bunch!

[COMMISSIONER *advances as if to strike* MAID.]

Trent. [*Mockingly.*] That's just what I've been waiting for! . . . The last fact I needed!

[COMMISSIONER *puts his right hand to his hip as if about to draw a gun, and with his left reaches out to grab the jacket of papers lying on the table.*]

Trent. [*As before.*] That's all right! You can have those! The real evidence is safe in my vault downtown! [*He lifts jacket from table and hands it to* COMMISSIONER.] Here's what you got! Look! A lot of waste paper!

[COMMISSIONER *snatches jacket, opens it, and stands dumbfounded, staring at its contents, while some of the scraps of newspaper with which it is stuffed flutter to the floor. He crushes the jacket in his fist and slams it down furiously.*]

Commissioner. Well, I'll be. . . .

Curtain

GEORGE WOODRUFF JOHNSTON

The author of this tense and gripping little play was born in Washington, D. C., September 17, 1858. His early education was received in private schools and he then entered the University of Pennsylvania from which institution he received the degree of bachelor of medicine.

Despite the demands of medical practice and research, Dr. Johnston cultivated his love for the theatre and frequently directed the plays of the Arts Club Players of Washington.

His death occurred in Washington, February 20, 1923.

A Word about the Play

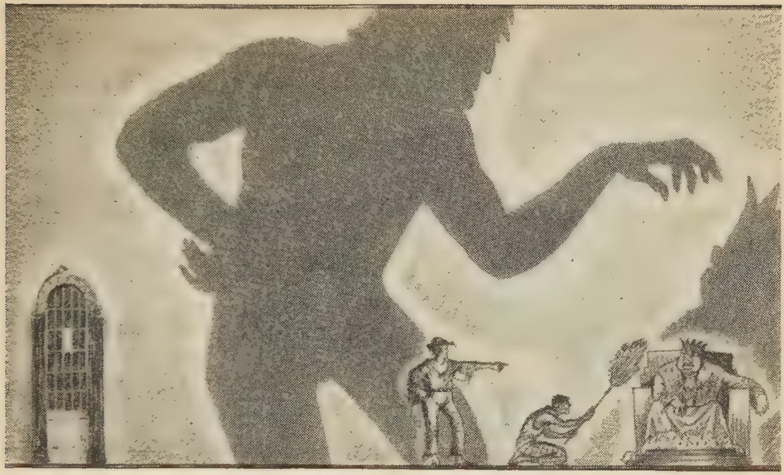
Everyone likes a good story, told merely for the story's sake, with plenty of thrills and surprises. Here is such a story in dramatic form. It is a game of wits, character against character, and author against audience—until almost the final moment, when the situation is unexpectedly reversed, and we are aware of what has been happening. The element of suspense, always valuable in drama, is here, of course, the main reliance. Melodrama such as this looks deceptively easy to write. But just try it!

For Study and Discussion

Note that the setting is described with some minuteness. Is this necessary to our understanding of the play? Could the play be presented without some of the accessories mentioned? In a play such as this, which is more important—plot or characters? Are the characters well drawn, or are they mere types? Point out some of the means by which the author contrives to throw suspicion, now upon one character, and then upon another. Did you suspect the outcome of the piece, or was it a complete surprise? Is it good dramatic technic to mystify one's audience, or should they share, to some extent at least, the dramatist's secrets?

For Further Reading

The Game of Chess	*Kenneth Goodman*
In the Library	*W. W. Jacobs*
The Traitor	*Percival Wilde*
The Gray Overcoat	*William Randall*
A Night at an Inn	*Lord Dunsany*
Two Crooks and a Lady	*Eugene Pillot*
The Cat and the Cherub	*C. B. Fernald*
The Police Matron	*Carl Glick*



THE BEGGAR AND THE KING*

A Morality Play

WINTHROP PARKHURST

CHARACTERS

THE KING OF A GREAT COUNTRY
HIS SERVANT
A BEGGAR

SCENE: *A chamber in the palace overlooks a courtyard. The season is midsummer. The windows of the palace are open, and from a distance there comes the sound of a man's voice crying for bread.* THE KING *sits in a golden chair. A*

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golden crown is on his head, and he holds in his hand a sceptre which is also of gold. A SERVANT *stands by his side, fanning him with an enormous fan of peacock feathers.*

The Beggar. [*Outside.*] Bread. Bread. Bread. Give me some bread.

The King. [*Languidly.*] Who is that crying in the street for bread?

The Servant. [*Fanning.*] O king, it is a beggar.

The King. Why does he cry for bread?

The Servant. O king, he cries for bread in order that he may satisfy his hunger.

The King. I do not like the sound of his voice. It annoys me very much. Send him away.

The Servant. [*Bowing.*] O king, he has been sent away.

The King. If that is so, then why do I hear his voice?

The Servant. O king, he has been sent away many times, yet each time that he is sent away he returns again, crying louder than he did before.

The King. He is very unwise to annoy me on such a warm day. He must be punished for his impudence. Use the lash on him.

The Servant. O king, it has been done.

The King. Then bring out the spears.

The Servant. O king, the guards have already bloodied their swords many times driving him away from the palace gates. But it is of no avail.

The King. Then bind him and gag him if necessary. If need be cut out his tongue. I do not like the sound of the fellow's voice. It annoys me very much.

The Servant. O king, thy orders were obeyed even yesterday.

The King. [*Frowning.*] No, that cannot be. A beggar cannot cry for bread who has no tongue.

The Servant. Behold he can—if he has grown another.

The King. What! Why, men are not given more than one tongue in a lifetime. To have more than one tongue is treason.

The Servant. If it is treason to have more than one tongue, O king, then is this beggar surely guilty of treason.

The King. [*Pompously.*] The punishment for treason is death. See to it that the fellow is slain. And do not fan me so languidly. I am very warm.

The Servant. [*Fanning more rapidly.*] Behold, O great and illustrious king, all thy commands were obeyed even yesterday.

The King. How! Do not jest with thy king.

The Servant. If I jest, then there is truth in a jest. Even yesterday, O king, as I have told thee, the beggar which thou now hearest crying aloud in the street was slain by thy soldiers with a sword.

The King. Do ghosts eat bread? Forsooth, men who have been slain with a sword do not go about in the streets crying for a piece of bread.

The Servant. Forsooth, they do if they are fashioned as this beggar.

The King. Why, he is but a man. Surely he cannot have more than one life in a lifetime.

The Servant. Listen to a tale, O king, which happened yesterday.

The King. I am listening.

The Servant. Thy soldiers smote this beggar for crying aloud in the streets for bread, but his wounds are already healed. They cut out his tongue, but he immediately grew another. They slew him, yet he is now alive.

The King. Ah! that is a tale which I cannot understand at all.

The Servant. O king, it may be well.

The King. I cannot understand what thou sayest, either.

The Servant. O king, that may be well also.

The King. Thou art speaking now in riddles. I do not like riddles. They confuse my brain.

The Servant. Behold, O king, if I speak in riddles it is because a riddle has come to pass.

[THE BEGGAR'S *voice suddenly cries out loudly.*]

The Beggar. [*Outside.*] Bread. Bread. Give me some bread.

The King. Ah! He is crying out again. His voice seems to me louder than it was before.

The Servant. Hunger is as food to the lungs, O king.

The King. His lungs I will wager are well fed. Ha, ha!

The Servant. But alas! his stomach is quite empty.

The King. That is not my business.

The Servant. Should I not perhaps fling him a crust from the window?

The King. No! To feed a beggar is always foolish. Every crumb that is given to a beggar is an evil seed from which springs another fellow like him.

The Beggar. [*Outside.*] Bread. Bread. Give me some bread.

The Servant. He seems very hungry, O king.

The King. Yes. So I should judge.

The Servant. If thou wilt not let me fling him a piece of bread thine ears must pay the debts of thy hand.

The King. A king can have no debts.

The Servant. That is true, O king. Even so, the noise of this fellow's begging must annoy thee greatly.

The King. It does.

The Servant. Doubtless he craves only a small crust from thy table and he would be content.

The King. Yea, doubtless he craves only to be a king and he would be very happy indeed.

The Servant. Do not be hard, O king. Thou art ever wise and just. This fellow is exceedingly hungry. Dost thou not command me to fling him just one small crust from the window?

The King. My commands I have already given thee. See that the beggar is driven away.

The Servant. But alas! O king, if he is driven away he will return again even as he did before.

The King. Then see to it that he is slain. I cannot be annoyed with the sound of his voice.

The Servant. But alas! O great and illustrious king, if he is slain he will come to life again even as he did before.

The King. Ah! that is true. But his voice troubles me. I do not like to hear it.

The Servant. His lungs are fattened with hunger. Of a truth they are quite strong.

The King. Well, propose a remedy to weaken them.

The Servant. A remedy, O king? [*He stops fanning.*]

The King. That is what I said. A remedy—and do not stop fanning me. I am exceedingly warm.

The Servant. [*Fanning vigorously.*] A crust of bread, O king, dropped from yonder window—forsooth that might prove a remedy.

The King. [*Angrily.*] I have said I will not give him a crust of bread. If I gave him a crust to-day he would be just as hungry again to-morrow, and my troubles would be as great as before.

The Servant. That is true, O king. Thy mind is surely filled with great learning.

The King. Therefore, some other remedy must be found.

The Servant. O king, the words of thy illustrious mouth are as very meat-balls of wisdom.

The King. [*Musing.*] Now let me consider. Thou sayest he does not suffer pain——

The Servant. Therefore he cannot be tortured.

The King. And he will not die——

The Servant. Therefore it is useless to kill him.

The King. Now let me consider. I must think of some other way.

The Servant. Perhaps a small crust of bread, O king——

The King. Ha! I have it. I have it. I myself will order him to stop.

The Servant. [*Horrified.*] O king!

The King. Send the beggar here.

The Servant. O king!

The King. Ha! I rather fancy the fellow will stop his noise when the king commands him to. Ha, ha, ha!

The Servant. O king, thou wilt not have a beggar brought into thy royal chamber!

The King. [*Pleased with his idea.*] Yea. Go outside and tell this fellow that the king desires his presence.

The Servant. O great and illustrious king, thou wilt surely not do this thing. Thou wilt surely not soil thy royal eyes by looking on such a filthy creature. Thou wilt surely not contaminate thy lips by speaking to a common beggar who cries aloud in the streets for bread.

The King. My ears have been soiled too much already. Therefore go now and do as I have commanded thee.

The Servant. O great and illustrious king, thou wilt surely not——

The King. [*Roaring at him.*] I said, Go! [THE SERVANT, *abashed, goes out.*] Forsooth, I fancy the fellow will stop his bawling when I order him to. Forsooth, I fancy he will be pretty well frightened when he hears that the king desires his presence. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

The Servant. [*Returning.*] O king, here is the beggar.

[*A shambling creature hung in filthy rags follows* THE SERVANT *slowly into the royal chamber.*]

The King. Ha! A magnificent sight, to be sure. Art thou the beggar who has been crying aloud in the streets for bread?

The Beggar. [*In a faint voice, after a slight pause.*] Art thou the king?

The King. I am the king.

The Servant. [*Aside to* THE BEGGAR.] It is not proper for a beggar to ask a question of a king. Speak only as thou art spoken to.

The King. [*To* THE SERVANT.] Do thou likewise. [*To* THE BEGGAR.] I have ordered thee here to speak to thee concerning a very grave matter. Thou art a beggar, I understand, who often cries aloud in the streets for bread. Now, the complaint of thy voice annoys me greatly. Therefore, do not beg any more.

The Beggar. [*Faintly.*] I—I do not understand.

The King. I said, do not beg any more.

The Beggar. I—I do not understand.

The Servant. [*Aside to* THE BEGGAR.] The king has commanded thee not to beg for bread any more. The noise of thy voice is as garbage in his ears.

The King. [*To* THE SERVANT.] Ha! An excellent flower of speech. Pin it in thy buttonhole. [*To* THE BEGGAR.] Thine ears, I see, are in need of a bath even more than thy body. I said; *Do not beg any more.*

The Beggar. I—I do not understand.

The King. [*Making a trumpet of his hands and shouting.*] DO NOT BEG ANY MORE.

The Beggar. I—I do not understand.

The King. Heavens! He is deafer than a stone wall.

The Servant. O king, he cannot be deaf, for he understood me quite easily when I spoke to him in the street.

The King. [*To* THE BEGGAR.] Art thou deaf? Canst thou hear what I am saying to thee now?

The Beggar. Alas! I can hear every word perfectly.

The King. Fft! The impudence. Thy tongue shall be cut out for this.

The Servant. O king, to cut out his tongue is useless, for he will grow another.

The King. No matter. It shall be cut out anyway. [*To* THE BEGGAR.] I have ordered thee not to beg any more in the streets. What meanest thou by saying thou dost not understand?

The Beggar. The words of thy mouth I can hear perfectly. But their noise is only a foolish tinkling in my ears.

The King. Fft! Only a— A lash will tickle thy hide for thee if thou dost not cure thy tongue of impudence. I, thy king, have ordered thee not to beg any more in the streets for bread. Signify, therefore, that thou wilt obey the orders of thy king by quickly touching thy forehead thrice to the floor.

The Beggar. That is impossible.

The Servant. [*Aside to* THE BEGGAR.] Come. It is not safe to tempt the patience of the king too long. His patience is truly great, but he loses it most wondrous quickly.

The King. Come, now: I have ordered thee to touch thy forehead to the floor.

The Servant. [*Nudging him.*] And quickly.

The Beggar. Wherefore should I touch my forehead to the floor?

The King. In order to seal thy promise to thy king.

The Beggar. But I have made no promise. Neither have I any king.

The King. Ho! He has made no promise. Neither has he any king. Ha, ha, ha. I have commanded thee not to beg any more, for the sound of thy voice is grievous unto my ears. Touch thy forehead now to the floor, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt go from this palace a free man. Refuse, and thou wilt be sorry before an hour that thou wast ever born.

The Beggar. I have ever lamented that I was. For to be born into this world a beggar is a more unhappy thing than any that I know—unless it is to be born a king.

The King. Fft! Thy tongue of a truth is too lively for thy health. Come, now, touch thy forehead thrice to the floor and promise solemnly that thou wilt never beg in the streets again. And hurry!

The Servant. [*Aside.*] It is wise to do as thy king commands thee. His patience is near an end.

The King. Do not be afraid to soil the floor with thy forehead. I will graciously forgive thee for that.

[THE BEGGAR *stands motionless.*]

The Servant. I said, it is not wise to keep the king waiting.

[THE BEGGAR *does not move.*]

The King. Well? [*A pause.*] WELL? [*In a rage.*] WELL?

The Beggar. O king, thou hast commanded me not to beg in the streets for bread, for the noise of my voice offends thee. Now therefore do I likewise command thee to remove thy crown from thy forehead and throw it from yonder window into the street. For when thou hast thrown thy crown into the street, then will I no longer be obliged to beg.

The King. Fft! Thou commandest me! Thou, a beggar from the streets, commandest me, a king, to remove my crown from my forehead and throw it from yonder window into the street!

The Beggar. That is what I said.

The King. Why, dost thou not know I can have thee slain for such words?

The Beggar. No. Thou canst not have me slain. The spears of thy soldiers are as straws against my body.

The King. Ha! We shall see if they are. We shall see!

The Servant. O king, it is indeed true. It is even as he has told thee.

The Beggar. I have required thee to remove thy crown from thy forehead. If so be thou wilt throw it from yonder window into the street, my voice will cease to annoy thee any more. But if thou refuse, then thou wilt wish thou hadst never had any crown at all. For thy days will be filled with a terrible boding and thy nights will be full of horrors, even as a ship is full of rats.

The King. Why, this is insolence. This is treason!

The Beggar. Wilt thou throw thy crown from yonder window?

The King. Why, this is high treason!

The Beggar. I ask thee, wilt thou throw thy crown from yonder window?

The Servant. [*Aside to* THE KING.] Perhaps it were wise to humor him, O king. After thou hast thrown thy crown away I can go outside and bring it to thee again.

The Beggar. Well? Well? [*He points to the window.*] Well?

The King. No! I will not throw my crown from that window—no, nor from any other window. What! Shall I obey the orders of a beggar? Never!

The Beggar. [*Preparing to leave.*] Truly, that is spoken like a king. Thou art a king, so thou wouldst prefer to lose thy head than that silly circle of gold that so foolishly sits upon it. But it is well. Thou art a king. Thou couldst not prefer otherwise. [*He walks calmly toward the door.*]

The King. [*To* THE SERVANT.] Stop him! Seize him! Does he think to get off so easily with his impudence!

The Beggar. [*Coolly.*] One of thy servants cannot stop me. Neither can ten thousand of them do me any harm. I am stronger than a mountain. I am stronger than the sea!

The King. Ha! We will see about that, we will see about that. [*To* THE SERVANT.] Hold him, I say. Call the guards. He shall be put in chains.

The Beggar. My strength is greater than a mountain and my words are more fearful than a hurricane. This servant of thine cannot even touch me. With one breath of my mouth I can blow over this whole palace.

The King. Dost thou hear the impudence he is offering me? Why dost thou not seize him? What is the matter with thee? Why dost thou not call the guards?

The Beggar. I will not harm thee now. I will only cry aloud in the streets for bread. But one day I will not be so kind to thee. On that day my mouth will be filled with a rushing wind and my arms will become as strong as steel rods, and I will blow over this palace, and all the bones in thy foolish body I will snap between my fingers. I will beat upon a large drum and thy head will be my drumstick. I will not do these things now. But one day I will do them. Therefore, when my voice sounds again in thine ears, begging for bread, remember what I have told thee. Remember, O king, and be afraid!

[*He walks out.* THE SERVANT, *struck dumb, stares after him.* THE KING *sits in his chair, dazed.*]

The King. [*Suddenly collecting his wits.*] After him! After him! He must not be allowed to escape! After him!

The Servant. [*Faltering.*] O king—I cannot seem to move.

The King. Quick, then. Call the guards. He must be caught and put in chains. Quick, I say. Call the guards!

The Servant. O king—I cannot seem to call them.

The King. How! Art thou dumb? Ah!

[The Beggar's *voice is heard outside.*]

The Beggar. Bread. Bread. Give me some bread.

The King. Ah! [*He turns toward the window, half-frightened, and then, almost instinctively, raises his hands toward his crown, and seems on the point of tossing it out the window. But with an oath he replaces it and presses it firmly on his head.*] How! Am I afraid of a beggar!

The Beggar. [*Continuing outside.*] Bread. Bread. Give me some bread.

The King. [*With terrible anger.*] Close that window!

The Servant *stand stupent, and the voice of* The Beggar *grows louder as the curtain falls.*]

Curtain

WINTHROP PARKHURST

The Story of His Life

The mood of social protest is more or less native to Mr. Parkhurst, as he is a descendant on his father's side of one of the judges who condemned Charles I of England, and on his mother's side of the brother of John Huss, the Bohemian martyr. Consequently it is not surprising to find him continuing the tradition with the accompanying play showing the futility of oppression and the inevitability of movements of protest.

Mr. Parkhurst was born in New York City October 15, 1891. He was educated in the public schools of Englewood, New Jersey. He was formerly organist and choirmaster of Madison Square Church and of St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, New York, and has written extensively on music, his major work being *The Anatomy of Music.*

Besides *The Beggar and the King* his plays include *Moracca,* a Biblical play which takes first rank in the author's affections, *It Never Happens,* and *Getting Unmarried.*

His vocations and avocations (which seem to be inextricably mixed) he lists as "music and literature; tennis and smoking." His home is in New York City.

A Word about the Play

Here we have a modern morality play—a dramatized idea in which the characters are abstractions or symbols. It is history compressed into half an hour; the lesson of the French and Russian revolutions is that no amount of repression can still the cry for social justice. Yet tyrants never learn.

For the acting of the play Mr. Parkhurst has the following suggestions:

"Pomposity on the part of the King and simplicity on the part of the Beggar are the chief characteristics to be emphasized. The Servant, apparently neutral, need not be colorless; he is the psychological connecting link between the King and the Beggar, and a great deal depends on him at the close of the play, where the power of the Beggar overwhelms him mentally. The opening of the play should be taken at a slow pace, suggestive of the hush before a thunder storm."

For Study and Discussion

What is the possible purpose of emphasizing gold in connection with the King—gold crown, golden chair, and golden sceptre? Who is the King? Why does the Servant constantly fan the King? Is it always foolish to feed a beggar? What was the experience of Rome with "bread and circuses"? Observe the quality of the dialog. How would you characterize its style? What is the nature of the action which takes place in the play? What causes the change in the attitude of the Beggar? What is the general tone, or atmosphere of the play?

For Further Reading

A Morality Play	*John L. Balderston*
The Slave with Two Faces	*Mary Carolyn Davies*
The Traveling Man	*Lady Gregory*
Two Slatterns and a King	*Edna St. Vincent Millay*
The Intruder	*Maurice Maeterlinck*
Hunger	*Eugene Pillot*
The Hour Glass	*William Butler Yeats*
Diplomacy	*David Pinski*

WHY READ PLAYS?

I For Education in the Use of Leisure

Probably no movement of recent times, both in and out of school, has grown with such speed as has interest in the reading and acting of plays. In view of the triumph of the talkies and the decay of the commercial drama outside the great cities, that statement may seem open to challenge. Nevertheless, these twin phenomena are perfectly compatible, inasmuch as they are, in part at least, cause and effect. For as the commercial drama has declined, the amateur drama has flourished.

A recent careful investigation has disclosed that more than 7,000 high schools in the United States are giving one or more courses in the arts which find expression in the production of a play. The number of schools offering such detailed and technical courses in play production is increasing rapidly. Many more, of course, include the study of the drama in the curriculum, either as part of the material of the English course or as related reading. And all signs point to the rapidly increasing importance of this work in both high school and college.

The reasons are not far to seek. Foremost among them, perhaps, is the realization that modern education must prepare for the wise use of that increasing leisure which the further development of the machine age is bound to bring. The audiences of the future, now in school, will not alone determine the kind of drama which they are to witness, but will also in part be determined by it. Good taste is not instinctive—in drama any more than in household decoration—; it must be learned. And the way to develop it is by the reading, study, and production of plays of recognized worth.

It was no accident that in Tudor England, which saw the finest flowering of the English drama, there was, according to the historian Froude, "acting everywhere." Our own age may not—probably will not—produce deathless dramas such as Shakespeare's, but it is a hopeful sign that today also there is "acting everywhere"—in schools, colleges, clubs, and "little theatres." Out of it already has come a large number of one-act plays of real merit, of original observation, of sure craftsmanship, and of genuine value as a reflection of American life. With a past of such real achievement, the future holds much of promise.

More and more, the schools of America are becoming aware of this real revival of interest in the drama. This, in turn, has been noted elsewhere. Kenneth Macgowan, well known theatrical critic and producer, has surveyed the situation, and has embodied the results of his extensive investigation in his book called *Footlights Across America.* He summarizes the situation thus:

"Broadway may be dying, but never was the theatre so alive in the rest of the United States. Hundreds of little theatres act Shaw and Shakespeare, Milne and Molnar, Barrie and Barry. A hundred universities are training men and women to direct these theatres and teach high school dramatics, as well as to act and write plays. And in the high schools literally hundreds of thousands of boys and girls are getting a critical and a practical acquaintance with the drama at an age when we used to see only a few plays a year. It is very new and very experimental—this training for leisure; but it is growing fast and growing surely. What I have written will be a very inaccurate underestimate in less than a year. The one thoroughly accurate statement that I can make is that an extraordinary new audience is a-borning in the high schools of the United States. It will come out looking for something besides talkies."

II For Development of the Imagination

It is everywhere agreed that the imagination is a superb attribute when constructively used. But no conscious effort is made to develop it. On the other hand, the mechanical age of which we are inevitably a part does everything to stunt it.

Consequently the reading and study, and—where possible—the acting of plays are important in that they furnish material for the exercise of the imagination. More than in any other form of literature, it is essential for the reader or listener to visualize the characters, the setting, the reactions of one character to another, and the action which accompanies the spoken word. The reader must also sense imaginatively the tone or atmosphere of the play in order that he may get the emotional effect that the author intended. In a word, he must become, not alone a reader of the printed page, but in effect the spectator of an action which he sees unfolding before him.

Contrast this with the passive rôle which attendance at the movies requires, and we can readily see which offers the more stimulus to the imaginative faculty. And, like everything else, imagination grows by exercise, just as it atrophies through disuse.

III For Broadening of the Sympathies

More and more, also, it is being realized that the emotional life of the student should be subjected to those influences which make for its best and truest development. Our attitudes, based very often on unreasoned prejudices, color our actions and determine our decisions.

No one contends, of course, that the reading and study of plays will change all this. It is, however, demonstrably clear that our sympathies may be broadened by sharing, through the reading or acting of a play, the emotions and feelings of a person whose life is different from our own. No one who has played Shylock, for instance, can harbor the same racial animosity which he might have entertained before sharing the emotions of Shakespeare's great Jew. Similarly, the reading of a group of one-act plays gives one the opportunity to enter emotionally into the lives of others—the dazed grandmother in *The Patchwork Quilt;* the solitary Mrs. Wright who never appears in *Trifles;* the beggar whose cry for bread can never be stilled in *The Beggar and the King.*

IV For Unfolding of the Personality

Modern education disbelieves more and more in the mere acquisition of facts; it emphasizes the development of the individual through a series of activities which shall be purposeful and valuable in themselves and which are largely undertaken at the bidding of the pupils' own interest. Certainly no activity in the whole school program is more in harmony with this concept of education than is the reading, study, and acting of plays.

If the study go no farther than the reading of the plays in class, each pupil taking some part, it will have helped to give pupils self-confidence and poise. Attention must be paid to the quality of voice used, to enunciation and pronunciation, to bodily movement, to facial expression and gesture. This alone is abundantly worth while.

But over and above this, there is the effect, often noted by teachers of dramatics, upon the personality of the boy or girl who, frequently from very unpromising beginnings, projects another character than his or her own. Diffidence gives way to something like self-confidence; other characteristics may be modified or developed. For this reason it is sometimes urged that casting should be done on the principle of opposites; that the timid should attempt to play the swaggering; the boisterous, the self-contained, etc. Our knowledge of the psychology of this process is still imperfect, but these subtle changes in personality traits have been too often observed to leave room for doubt regarding them.

V For Training in Effective Coöperation

Finally, if the study proceed to the actual production, whether public or private, of any play, there is an unequalled opportunity for training in effective coöperation. The production of any play calls for the highest kind of team work. Brilliant—and often erratic—"stars" have no place in the high school cast. All must work together for the good of the common project.

This kind of subordination of self to the purpose of the group provides a training for citizenship which is immensely valuable. In a complex society such as ours to-day, everyone must learn how to live and work with his fellows. This is the great lesson which the school must teach. No one would be so rash as to affirm that the production of one play—or many—will teach it completely. But the situation is there. The wise educator will make the most of it.

HOW TO STUDY THESE PLAYS

I The First Reading

Obviously, no one method of studying plays prevails. Certain general principles, however, will be found applicable to most situations, and may be briefly indicated.

Since a play is usually a story of some sort, told by different characters in action upon a stage, it follows that the first reading should be concerned mainly with getting the outline of the action and some conception of the characters of the piece. After the first reading it should be possible to sum up the action and to give some account of the persons to whom the dramatist has introduced us.

II The Discussion in Class

Suggestive questions on each play have been placed after the text. Many more will, of course, occur to both teacher and pupils in the spontaneous discussion which will naturally follow the first reading.

In estimating the worth of a play as literature such questions as the following will naturally arise:

Does the play tell the truth; that is, does it seriously attempt to "hold the mirror up to nature"? Is the action plausible,—something that really might have occurred in the situation set forth by the dramatist? Are the characters real people who would naturally and inevitably act as the playwright has made them act? (Of course, if the play is a fanciful one, such questions do not so strictly apply.)

Has the play an idea which is novel and original? Has this idea been expressed dramatically; that is, in action?

What is the theme of the play; that is, the idea which the play is written to express? Thus a play may be written to illustrate the homely adage that "honesty is the best policy." Another may have for its underlying idea the misunderstanding between "crabbed age and youth." Usually—not always—the theme of a play may be stated in a single sentence.

Is the action which has taken place before the rise of the curtain (technically known as *exposition*) clearly explained so that we quickly come into the possession of the facts necessary for understanding the play? Is it expressed dramatically; that is, by action, rather than by mere telling?

Does the play mount in interest? Is our attention caught and held throughout the action of the piece? Does the dramatist hold us in suspense throughout the play? Or do we guess the ending before we come to it?

Is the dialog fresh and natural? Does it seem like real talk? Has it any literary distinction, such as wit, grace, rhythm, etc?

These—and many more—questions will serve to make the class discussion both interesting and profitable. From it will emerge some definite standards which may be applied, not alone to the plays which are read and studied, but also to those which are seen from time to time on stage and screen.

III The Dramatic Reading

But a play is not really a play until it is presented by actors before an audience. As printed in a book, it is merely the manuscript from which a play may be made. To bring out its full values, then, pupils should present the play on a stage before an audience.

At first glance this seems a counsel of perfection. Many schools are not equipped with stages. But all we need is a little free space in the front of the classroom. And where shall we recruit an audience? But there is no necessity for an elaborate advertising campaign, for here they are, right in the class.

The first problem, of course, is the casting. This may be done in various ways. After the play has been thoroughly—but not too thoroughly—discussed, the pupils will often be able to make valuable suggestions. Sometimes the casting may profitably be delegated to a committee which is placed in charge of the presentation. Always, of course, the teacher will retain the veto power upon these selections, largely for the purpose of ensuring that all pupils will have equal opportunity for participation. To allow a few pupils, even though possessed of outstanding ability, to monopolize the chief rôles, is a capital mistake, and the surest method of killing the interest of the class.

Rehearsal will be necessary, and should not be conducted before the class. Rôles need not be memorized, but each actor will hold his book in his hand. It is essential, however, that each actor know where he is to stand, how and when he is to move, what particular action he is to suit to the lines he is to read, what are the limits of the stage, and where the entrances and exits are to be made. Much more than this should not be attempted, as the chief charm of the presentation will be spontaneity. All preparations should be simple.

As for scenery, none is necessary. Shakespeare's stage was almost barren of it, and his audiences were therefore free to construct in their imagination the castle which "hath a pleasant seat" equally with the blasted heath on which the witches croaked forth their prophecies. And for lighting, let it be remembered that *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, to mention only two plays in which the atmosphere is one of deep and foreboding gloom, were played in a roofless theatre whose only source of illumination was the afternoon sun.

For costumes and properties a few simple suggestions may add to the effectiveness of the reading, although in many cases nothing will be strictly necessary. Where costumes are essential to a play, a shawl, a hat, a handkerchief may be used to suggest the desired effect. A cane, a fan, a chair, a table—these simple things may heighten the effect—if they do not get in the actor's way. Here, as always, we must remember that the play is much more important than its accessories, and that the actor's interpretation, if it be sincere and spontaneous, will not absolutely require any of them.

After the reading of the play before the class, time may be taken for discussion. Weak points will be considered, but the emphasis will be, of course, upon the things which were well done. It may be that another performance will be decided upon. If this is the case—and the interest of the class must determine this point—, an occasion should be made for it, in order that repetition may not make it stale. Another class may be invited in, the play may be prepared for an assembly program, or given before the dramatic club. In this connection it must be remembered that no public performance may be given without the payment of royalty to the author or his agent.

IV THE PUBLIC PERFORMANCE

If a public performance should be decided upon, the first arrangement which should be made is with the author or his agent. All the plays included in this volume are subject to royalty when presented in public, whether admission is charged or not. In no case should there be any attempt to evade payment of the modest fee which is required, as such evasion is legally and morally indefensible. Furthermore, unless authors receive adequate compensation for their productions, they will cease to write, and the present rich output of dramatic offerings will dwindle away to nothing.

There is not space in this exposition for any detailed explanation of the technic of play production. Several good manuals dealing with this subject are named in the list which is appended. It is sufficient to point out a general principle—if the production of plays by young people is to be the truly educative process which it should—and can—be, much more attention will have to be paid by educators to the *process,* and much less to the *result.*

In their zeal for good productions dramatic teachers have very often exploited a few talented students, have drilled them to the point of exhaustion, and then have been content to accept the personal triumph which accrued to them in spite of the occasional irritation of other teachers whose work had been neglected during the fevered period of preparation of the play. Actually, of course, such a performance has no educational value, as it is merely a human marionette show with the director pulling all the strings.

To change these conditions, which are manifestly bad for all concerned, the following principles should be kept firmly before us:

1. Instead of one—or at most two—elaborate productions a year, giving opportunity to only a selected few (usually those who least need such training), there should be frequent informal productions of one-act plays, thus giving opportunity to a much greater number of pupils.

2. Plays should be selected, not on the basis of their ability to draw a crowd and thus make money, but for their literary worth, their emotional suitability to high school pupils, and their truth to human nature.

3. Plays should be selected to fit the pupils, rather than the pupils to fit the plays.

4. Pupils who need the educative value of public appearance should, where possible, be chosen for rôles in preference to those who have already shown their competency in previous plays.

5. Pupils should be encouraged to make their own characterizations

of their parts, and should not be dominated by the director's conception of the part. The director will, of course, harmonize conceptions and unify the play, but he should never undertake to make his actors mere pale imitations of himself.

6. A definite schedule of rehearsals should be laid out in advance and strictly adhered to. Regular progress in the mastery of the play should be demanded of all. Careful planning will eliminate the last-minute frenzy of preparation, which accomplishes nothing except to fray everyone's nerves. Usually 10 rehearsals of an hour to an hour and a half in duration should be sufficient for a one-act play.

7. While scenery, costumes, and properties in keeping with the requirements of the play are desirable, they may frequently be simplified, or even eliminated, without serious loss to the play. Draperies of a neutral color form an excellent background for most plays. Screens may be used with good effect. Skill, taste, and imagination may do wonders.

8. The teacher who undertakes to produce a play should not monopolize the opportunities for organization and management. As the best executives are those who burden themselves least with detail, so the best directors are those who delegate their powers freely. Pupils grow through opportunities for self-direction (under wise guidance, of course), for making decisions, for organizing and managing projects which they recognize as theirs. Responsibility, like any other quality, does not just happen; it grows through exercise.

THE ONE-ACT PLAY AS A LITERARY FORM

One-act plays have long been known in the commercial theatre, where they were used in the latter part of the nineteenth century as "curtain raisers" or as afterpieces—usually of a hilariously humorous nature—to send the audience home in good humor. But it was only with the rise of the amateur theatre—which had its real beginnings a few years before the war—that one-act plays of real merit began to be written. Now distinguished dramatists in all countries have contributed one-act plays of recognized merit. The general level of excellence is high.

It is obvious that the difference between the one-act and the full-length play is not merely one of length. The one-act play is not a long play condensed. It has a distinct form and structure of its own.

The one-act play takes a single situation, develops it fully, and then stops. It has fewer characters. It is all in one mood or key, and this atmosphere it must sustain throughout. While it suffers from the possible disadvantage of not being able to show its characters developing under the stress of the action, it has the compensation of being able to sustain throughout its comparatively brief length a mood or atmosphere which would be tedious or intolerable in the longer form. Thus plays of fantasy or suspense are usually better as one-act plays.

The analogy with the short story readily suggests itself. A short story is not simply a condensed novel, but, as Poe pointed out, a story which produces a single effect. This totality of impression is one of the chief assets of the one-act play.

Under another heading may be found suggestive questions to test the literary worth of the play. Others will readily occur, for it must be remembered that a play becomes literature only if it possesses those permanently satisfying qualities which make any other piece of writing literature—whether it be story, poem, essay, or novel. Does it tell us something about human experience in terms that we can experience? That is the fundamental test.

COLLECTIONS OF ONE-ACT PLAYS

Atlantic Book of Modern Plays, by S. A. Leonard. Atlantic Monthly Press.
Contemporary One-Act Plays, by B. R. Lewis. Charles Scribner's Sons.
Dramas by Present-Day Writers, by R. W. Pence. Charles Scribner's Sons.
Types of Modern Dramatic Composition, by Phillips & Johnson. Ginn and Company.
One-Act Plays, by Clark & Cook. D. C. Heath and Company.
One-Act Plays, by Webber & Webster. Houghton Mifflin Company.
One-Act Plays by Modern Authors, by H. L. Cohen. Harcourt, Brace and Company.
The Junior Play Book, by H. L. Cohen. Harcourt, Brace and Company.
One-Act Plays, by G. A. Goldstone. Allyn & Bacon.
Forty Minute Plays from Shakespeare, by F. G. Barker. The Macmillan Company.
Short Scenes from Shakespeare, by I. M. Gray. Macmillan Company.
Plays for Classroom Interpretation, by E. B. Knickerbocker. Henry Holt and Company.
Twelve Plays, by E. B. Knickerbocker. Henry Holt and Company.
Plays of the 47 Workshop. Brentano's.
One-Act Plays for Stage and Study. Samuel French.
Twelve One-Act Plays for Study and Production, by S. M. Tucker. Ginn and Company.

BOOKS ON PLAY PRODUCTION

The Book of Play Production, by Milton Smith. D. Appleton and Company.

The Art of Play Production, by John Dolman. Harper & Brothers.

Acting and Play Production, by Andrews & Weirick. Longmans, Green and Company.

The Process of Play Production, by Crafton & Royer. Crofts.

How to Produce Amateur Plays, by Barrett Clark. Little, Brown and Company.

Technique in Dramatic Art, by Halliam Bosworth. The Macmillan Company.

Problems of the Actor, by Louis Calvert. Henry Holt and Company.

Producing in Little Theatres, by Clarence Stratton. Henry Holt and Company.

Equipment for Stage Production, by A. E. Krows. D. Appleton and Company.

The Scenewright, by Andre Smith. The Macmillan Company.

Stage Costuming, by A. B. Young. The Macmillan Company.

How to Costume a Play, by Grimball & Wells. The Century Company.

Shakespeare for Community Players, by Roy Mitchell. E. P. Dutton and Company.

The Art of Make-Up, by Helena Chalmers. D. Appleton and Company.

Stage Lighting, by Theodore Fuchs. Little, Brown and Company.

SOME USEFUL LISTS OF PLAYS

Plays for Amateurs, by S. M. Tucker. H. W. Wilson Company.

Plays for High Schools and Colleges. National Council of Teachers of English.

Plays for Amateurs. Drama League of America.

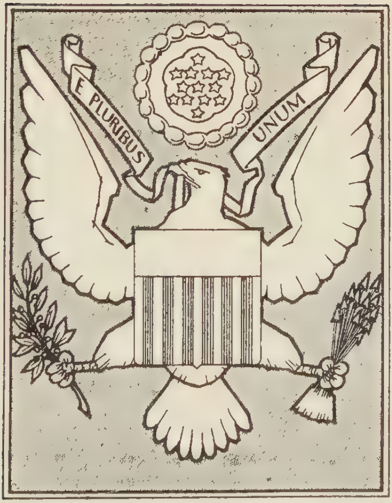
A List of Plays, by Merrill & Watkins. Teachers College, Columbia University.

FAREWELL · ADDRESS

GEORGE WASHINGTON

FIRST · BUNKER · HILL · ORATION

DANIEL WEBSTER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UNUM

SECTION III

FAREWELL ADDRESS

George Washington

The Address

Parts I–X 271–293
The Life of George Washington 294
The Historical Background of the *Farewell Address* 296
The Origin and Authorship of the *Address* 299
Suggestions for the Study of the *Address*.................. 300
Topics for Oral and Written Composition.................. 303

New Type Tests

I A True-False Test 305
II A Multiple-Choice Test 306

THE FIRST BUNKER HILL ORATION

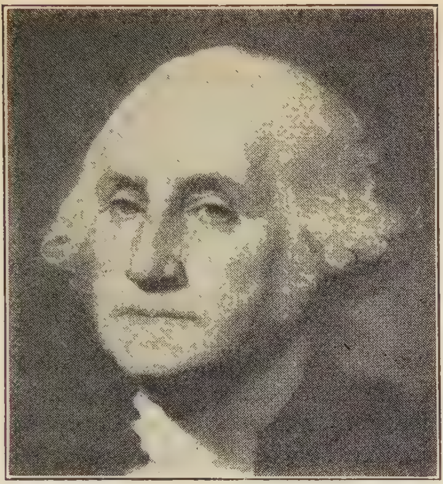
Daniel Webster

The Oration

Parts I–XIV 307–333
The Life of Daniel Webster.......................... 333
The Battle of Bunker Hill.......................... 336
The Nature of an Oration.......................... 339
Suggestions for the Study of the *Oration* 340
Topics for Oral and Written Composition.................. 344

New Type Tests

I A True-False Test 345
II A Multiple-Choice Test 346



G Washington

FAREWELL ADDRESS *

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS: The period for a new election [1] of a citizen, to administer the executive government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce [2] to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

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* ADDRESS—Washington did not deliver this address. It was printed in Claypoole's *American Daily Advertiser* for September 19, 1796 at Philadelphia in accordance with Washington's wish.

[1] A NEW ELECTION—The election of the chief executive then took place not by direct vote of the people as at present but according to the method laid down originally in Article II, Section I of the Constitution. "Washington asked Hamilton when the document ought to appear, and the latter said that it ought to come about two months before the meeting of the electoral college. It was issued three months before that event."—Bassett, *Federalist System,* p. 146.

[2] CONDUCE—Lead.

I beg you, at the same time, to do me the justice to be assured, that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country; and that, in withdrawing the tender[3] of service, which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest; no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness; but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in, the office to which your suffrages[4] have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination[5] to the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address[6] to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations,[7] and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence,[8] impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty or propriety; and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that, in the present circumstances [9] of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

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[3] TENDER—Offer.

[4] SUFFRAGES—Votes.

[5] SACRIFICE OF INCLINATION—"Washington hesitated before he made up his mind to accept the presidency. He had a genuine love of retirement . . . and he had been so active in securing the adoption of the Constitution that he feared that people would say, if he now became president, that he had been seeking his own advancement."—Bassett, *Federalist System*.

[6] PREPARATION OF AN ADDRESS—Washington hoped in 1792 that he might retire from the Presidency, and he began at that time, with the help of Madison, a farewell address from which the first two paragraphs of this *Address* came with some change.

[7] POSTURE OF OUR AFFAIRS WITH FOREIGN NATIONS—Washington here refers to boundary difficulties with England in the Northwest, and to the refusal of England to make a treaty of commerce; to Spanish intrigues in the Southwest; and to the affair of Citizen Genet.

[8] PERSONS ENTITLED TO MY CONFIDENCE—Washington here refers to Randolph, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, and Knox, all of whom urged him to accept a second term.

The impressions with which I first undertook the arduous trust were explained on the proper occasion.[10] In the discharge of this trust I will only say that I have with good intentions contributed toward the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible [11] judgment was capable. Not unconscious in the outset of the inferiority of my qualifications,[12] experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others,[13] has strengthened the motives to diffidence[14] of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied that, if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

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[9] PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES—By 1796, "external as well as internal" affairs had somewhat improved. For example, treaties had been concluded with England and with Spain, Hamilton's financial system had restored the national credit, the collapse of the Whiskey Rebellion had strengthened the hand of the federal government, and while party animosity was still bitter there was, nevertheless, discernible a stronger national spirit.

[10] PROPER OCCASION—Washington here alludes to his *First Inaugural Address:* "Among the vicissitudes incident to life, no event could have filled me with greater anxieties, than that of which the notification was transmitted by your order, and received on the 14th day of the present month [April, 1789]. On the one hand, I was summoned by my country, whose voice I can never hear but with veneration and love, from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection. . . . On the other hand, the magnitude and difficulty of the trust, to which the voice of my country called me, being sufficient to awaken in the wisest and most experienced of her citizens a distrustful scrutiny into his qualifications, could not but overwhelm with despondence one, who, inheriting inferior endowments from nature, and unpractised in the duties of civil administration, ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies. In this conflict of emotions, all I dare aver is, that it has been my faithful study to collect my duty from a just appreciation of every circumstance by which it might be affected. All I dare hope is, that, if in executing this task, I have been too much swayed by a grateful remembrance of former instances, or by an affectionate sensibility of this transcendent proof of the confidence of my fellow-citizens; and have thence too little consulted my incapacity as well as disinclination for the weighty and untried cares before me; my error will be palliated by the motives which misled me, and its consequences be judged by my country with some share of the partiality in which they originated. Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station."

[11] FALLIBLE—Liable to error.

[12] INFERIORITY OF MY QUALIFICATIONS—See the note above, the sentence beginning: "On the other hand, the magnitude . . ."

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable[15] attachment by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal. If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism,[16] the constancy of your support[17] was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guaranty of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that

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[13] In the eyes of others—Bassett says, "Washington's action had been taken, not so much because he sought retirement in his old age as because he was disgusted with the abuse of the Republicans. . . . Among those who refused to give Washington the compliment of a last God-speed were Andrew Jackson, Edward Livingston, Nathaniel Macon, and W. B. Giles, men long afterwards noted for their unyielding Republicanism. Giles probably expressed the feeling of this group when he said in the debate on the reply: 'I must acknowledge that I am one of those who do not think as much of the President as others do.' "

[14] Diffidence—Distrust of self.

[15] Inviolable—That is, one that he could not violate.

[16] Under circumstances . . . spirit of criticism—Each phrase here might be illustrated by some incident or circumstance from the history of Washington's eight years in the presidency. See the *Historical Background.*

Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it.

[17] CONSTANCY OF YOUR SUPPORT—For example, in 1792 when Washington consulted with his friends on the advisability of refusing a second election, "Jefferson, divided between his political views and his friendship for his chief, hesitated to give an answer, probably intending to get the counsel of his friends; but he soon realized the extent of the demand for Washington, and he added his opinion to that of the other leaders, that the president should accept another term."—Bassett, *Federalist System,* p. 54.

II

HERE, perhaps, I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger natural to that solicitude, urge me, on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments, which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of your felicity[1] as a people. These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias[2] his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.[3]

Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament[4] of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.

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[1] FELICITY—Happiness. [2] BIAS—Influence or prejudice.

[3] FORMER AND NOT DISSIMILAR OCCASION—An allusion to Washington's resignation of his commission at the close of the War at Annapolis, December 23, 1783, when he said: "I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence . . . and the assistance I received from my Countrymen, increases with every review of the momentous contest."

[4] LIGAMENT—Tie. Compare the expression "heart strings."

The unity of government, which constitutes you one people, is also dear to you.[5] It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquillity at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee that from different causes and from different quarters much pains will be taken, many artifices[6] employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously[7]) directed, it is of infinite moment[8] that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium[9] of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens, by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections.[10] The name of

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[5] UNITY . . . ALSO DEAR TO YOU—In 1792 Jefferson wrote Washington: "The confidence of the whole Union is centered in you. Your being at the helm will be more than an answer to every argument, which can be used to alarm and lead the people in any quarter into violence or secession. North and South will hang together, if they have you to hang on." By 1796 the strong feeling of local patriotism which had threatened the complete adoption of the Constitution had considerably diminished.

[6] ARTIFICES—Devices, stratagems, wiles.

[7] INSIDIOUSLY—By a stealthy treachery.

[8] MOMENT—Consequence, importance.

[9] PALLADIUM—Safeguard. In classical mythology, the palladium was a statue of Pallas Athene in the citadel of ancient Troy. It was believed that the safety of Troy depended upon this statue.

America, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation[11] derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners,[12] habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together; the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings and successes.

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility,[13] are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your interest. Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the union of the whole.

The North, in an unrestrained intercourse with the South, protected by the equal laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise and precious materials of manufacturing industry. The South in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the North, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the North, it finds its particular navigation invigorated; and, while it contributes in different ways to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength, to which itself is unequally adapted. The East, in a like intercourse with the West, already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications[14] by land and water will more and more

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[10] To CONCENTRATE YOUR AFFECTIONS—That is, to demand that your affections be centered upon it.

[11] APPELLATION—Name. Washington alludes to the pride which some of his contemporaries took in being called Virginians or New Yorkers.

[12] SAME RELIGIONS, MANNERS—See Burke's *Speech,* Unit IV, in this volume.

[13] SENSIBILITY—Feelings, sentiment.

[14] INTERIOR COMMUNICATIONS—Roads and canals. It is said that the first man who really saw the future of canal communication was Washington. The idea of a canal between the Chesapeake and Ohio Rivers seems to have originated with him. What seems to be the first canal in the United States was built around the rapids of the Connecticut River at South Hadley, Massachusetts, in 1793.

find, a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad, or manufactures at home. The West derives from the East supplies requisite to its growth and comfort, and, what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it must of necessity owe the secure enjoyment of indispensable outlets for its own productions to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as one nation. Any other tenure [15] by which the West can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength or from an apostate and unnatural connection [16] with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.[17]

While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations, and, what is of inestimable value, they must derive from union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighboring countries not tied together by the same governments, which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence, likewise, they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

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[15] TENURE—Terms.

[16] APOSTATE . . . CONNECTION—A connection made by forsaking previous associations. Washington alludes here to attempts on the part of Spain to induce the territories of Kentucky and Tennessee to forsake the United States and transfer their allegiance to Spain, offering as an inducement an outlet for their produce at New Orleans. He also seems to have had in mind the agitation in the southwest territories to set up an independent government which could treat with Spain for commercial privileges.

[17] PRECARIOUS—Insecure.

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind, and exhibit the continuance of the Union as a primary object of patriotic desire. Is there a doubt whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere?[18] Let experience solve it. To listen to mere speculation[19] in such a case were criminal. We are authorized to hope that a proper organization of the whole, with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions, will afford a happy issue to the experiment. It is well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to union, affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands.

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[18] EMBRACE SO LARGE A SPHERE—Washington alludes here to the doubt expressed by many in his day that a republican form of government could be made to work over so great a territory as that which lay between the Mississippi and the Atlantic Ocean.

[19] MERE SPECULATION—Mere theorizing.

III

IN CONTEMPLATING the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as a matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations Northern and Southern, Atlantic and Western; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart-burnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. The inhabitants of our western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head; they have seen, in the negotiation by the executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the senate, of the treaty with Spain,[1] and in the universal satisfaction at that event throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the general government and in the Atlantic States unfriendly to their interests in regard to the Mississippi; they have been witnesses to the formation of two treaties, that with Great Britain[2] and that with Spain, which secure to them everything they could desire, in respect to our foreign relations, towards confirming their prosperity. Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preservation of these advantages on the Union by which they were procured? Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren and connect them with aliens?

To the efficacy and permanency of your union, a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliance, however strict, between the parts can be an adequate substitute; they must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times have experienced. Sensible of this momentous truth, you have improved upon your first essay,[3] by the adoption of a constitution of government better calculated than your former[4] for an intimate union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns. This government, the offspring of our own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true Liberty.[5] The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

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[1] The treaty with Spain—Washington alludes to the treaty concluded October 27, 1795, under the terms of which Spain gave Americans the right to use the Mississippi River and allowed them the right of deposit of their produce at New Orleans.

[2] With Great Britain—The treaty negotiated by John Jay in November, 1794, securing us some commercial advantages in the British East and West Indies, and settling the boundary dispute and other differences.

[3] Essay (ĕ-sā′)—Attempt.

[4] Your former—That is, the Articles of Confederation.

All obstructions to the execution of the laws,[6] all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of fashion, rather than the organs of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common councils, and modified by mutual interests.

However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert[7] the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government; destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.

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[5] THE FUNDAMENTAL MAXIMS OF TRUE LIBERTY—Washington here alludes to the principle that the only true liberty is liberty under the law.

[6] ALL OBSTRUCTIONS TO THE EXECUTION OF THE LAWS—Without doubt, Washington here refers to the Whiskey Insurrection which was an armed attempt to defeat the execution of a federal law. It is clear, however, that he has in mind also what he refers to in his letters as Democratic Societies, which in his letter to Henry Lee, governor of Virginia, were instituted "by their father Genet, for purposes well known to the government, that they would shake the government to its foundation." A number of his letters reveal his conviction that "these societies were instituted by the *artful* and *designing* members (many of their body I have no doubt mean well, but know little of the real plan) primarily to sow the seeds of jealousy and distrust among the people of the government, by destroying all confidence in the administration of it." In another letter written from Philadelphia he says, "The insurrection in the western counties of this State . . . may be considered as the first ripe *fruit* of the Democratic Societies."

[7] SUBVERT—Overturn, overthrow.

IV

TOWARDS the preservation of your government, and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious[1] the pretexts. One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the constitution, alterations,[2] which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of governments as of other human institutions; that experience is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country; that facility in changes, upon the credit of mere hypothesis[3] and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion; and remember, especially, that, for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigor as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

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[1] SPECIOUS—Appearing right and true, plausible.

[2] ALTERATIONS—Washington here alludes to a number of proposed amendments of anti-Federalist origin, some of which would have reduced the federal government to impotency. For example, when the first Congress convened under the Constitution, seventy-eight amendments were offered by various states.

[3] UPON THE CREDIT OF MERE HYPOTHESIS—Upon no better foundation than theoretical arguments.

V

I HAVE already intimated to you the danger of parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discrimination. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party,[4] generally.

This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities,[5] is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual;[6] and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty.

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[4] BANEFUL EFFECTS OF THE SPIRIT OF PARTY—Washington himself suffered much from what he called the "baneful effects of party." According to Bassett, he was charged by the Republicans with "betraying the pledge given to France, and taking more salary than was allotted to him. His mail was even tampered with, in the hope of finding political matters of advantage to his opponents, and a most shameful forgery of letters in 1777 was searched out and reprinted as genuine. He was sensitively devoted to official integrity, and all these attacks cut him to the quick."

[5] MOST HORRID ENORMITIES—Washington had in mind very likely the excesses to which party rivalry led in the French Revolution, and also the proscriptions in Rome under Marius and Sulla.

[6] THE DISORDERS . . . INDIVIDUAL—The rise of Napoleon is a good illustration of this statement, but it is to be questioned if Washington had Napoleon in mind. It is more likely that he was thinking of such men as Marius, Sulla, and Julius Cæsar, see *PROSE AND POETRY Eleventh Year*, pp. 625–634.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight, the common and continued mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

It serves always to distract the public councils, and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another, foments occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the doors to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion, that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This within certain limits is probably true, and in governments of a monarchical cast, patriotism may look with indulgence,[7] if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.

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[7] PATRIOTISM MAY LOOK WITH INDULGENCE—For illustration see the comment on the activities of the Whig party in this volume, in the *Historical Background of Burke's Speech.*

VI

IT IS important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution, in those intrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another.[1] The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks[2] in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern, some of them in our country and under our own eyes.[3] To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for, though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.

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[1] TO CONFINE . . . ENCROACH UPON ANOTHER—Washington here alludes, of course, to the danger which would follow upon permitting one department of the government, say for example, the executive, to usurp the powers of the legislative and judicial branches. In the course of our history Congress has shown itself very jealous of its privileges. Possibly Washington himself had in mind a resolution of the House of Representatives passed in March, 1796, requesting him to lay before the House "a copy of the instructions to the minister of the United States, who negotiated the treaty with the King of Great Britain, together with the correspondence and other documents relative to that treaty." President Hoover had a similar request from the Senate in July, 1930.

[2] RECIPROCAL CHECKS—Washington here refers to such constitutional checks as the following: (1) the President may make no appointments to office without the advice and consent of the Senate; (2) the laws made by Congress may be declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court; (3) the President is given the power of veto. Can you give other illustrations of the division of power under our government?

[3] IN OUR OWN COUNTRY AND UNDER OUR OWN EYES—As a matter of fact, those things in our Constitution which have worked well had been in operation in various colonial governments before the separation from England. See Webster's *Oration,* Part XI, third paragraph, in this volume.

VII

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician equally with the pious man ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience[1] both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who, that is a sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge.[2] In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is, to use it as sparingly as possible; avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it; avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertion in time of peace to discharge the debts, which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should co-operate. To facilitate to them the performance of their duty it is essential that you should practically bear in mind, that towards the payment of debts there must be revenue; that to have revenue there must be taxes; that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant; that the intrinsic embarrassment, inseparable from the selection of the proper objects (which is always a choice of difficulties), ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the government in making it, and for a spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtaining revenue which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.

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[1] Experience—Washington no doubt had in mind the attempt made by the French Revolutionists to abolish both God and religion and to set up a rule of reason. We have seen a similar thing attempted in our day in revolutionary Russia.

[2] Diffusion of knowledge—Washington once wrote "It has always been a source of serious reflection and sincere regret with me, that the youth of the United States should be sent to foreign countries for purposes of education." When he was preparing his *Farewell Address* he wrote Hamilton asking him to introduce into the *Address* a section expressive of his sentiments on education. See *The Authorship of the Address.*

VIII

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages, which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which en-nobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments[1] for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage,[2] and to be haughty and intractable when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence, frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill-will[3] and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times, it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of nations has been the victim.

So likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former, into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions, by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld. And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation), facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium,[4] sometimes even with popularity; gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

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[1] ANTIPATHIES . . . ATTACHMENTS—Washington here alludes to the pro-British sympathies of the Federalists and the pro-French sympathies of the Republicans which had heightened the bitter party strife of his two administrations.

[2] UMBRAGE—Offense.

[3] THE NATION, PROMPTED BY ILL-WILL—In this and the following paragraph Washington is making allusions, no doubt, to the party strife which made it so difficult for our government to maintain neutrality in the war between England and France.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practice the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak, towards a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite[5] of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow citizens), the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike for another, cause those whom they actuate[6] to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

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[4] ODIUM—Reproach.

[5] SATELLITE—The term comes from astronomy. The moon, for example, which attends and revolves about the earth is the latter's satellite. Hence, the term satellite has come to mean one without will of his own, who simply follows another.

[6] ACTUATE—Influence.

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

IX

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality, we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand; neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; consulting the natural course of things; diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing; establishing with powers so disposed, in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our merchants, and to enable the government to support them, conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view, that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that, by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion, which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

X

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations.

But, if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism; this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

How far in the discharge of my official duties I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated,[1] the public records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to you and to the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe,[2] my proclamation of the 22d of April, 1793, is the index of my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice, and by that of your Representatives in both Houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me, uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination, with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take, and was bound in duty and interest to take, a neutral position. Having taken it, I determined, as far as should depend upon me, to maintain it, with moderation, perseverance and firmness.

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct, it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe, that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without anything more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity towards other nations.

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[1] DELINEATED—Set forth.

[2] STILL SUBSISTING WAR IN EUROPE—The war between France on one hand, and Great Britain and her allies on the other. Washington alludes here to his proclamation of neutrality of April 22, 1793, in the preamble of which he said, "The duty and interest of the United States require, that they should with sincerity and good faith adopt and pursue a conduct friendly and impartial towards the belligerent powers."

The inducements of interest for observing that conduct will best be referred to your own reflections and experience. With me a predominant motive has been to endeavor to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.

Though, in reviewing the incidents of my administration, I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence; and that, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it, which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors[3] for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat, in which I promise myself to realize, without alloy,[4] the sweet enjoyment of partaking, in the midst of my fellow citizens, the benign[5] influence of good laws under a free government, the ever favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors, and dangers.

George Washington.

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[3] Progenitors—Forefathers. John Washington, the great-grandfather of the President emigrated to Virginia and settled in Westmoreland County in 1658.

[4] Without alloy—That is, wholly.

[5] Benign—Propitious.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

(1732–1799)

IT WOULD seem that the tradition which pictures Washington as growing up in aristocratic ease and affluence on a broad Virginia plantation is somewhat in need of revision. It is true that he came of an old family. The first of those progenitors to whom he refers in the *Address* was his great-grandfather John Washington, who left England in 1656 and earned his passage "as second man in Sayleing ye Vessel to Virginia," where he took up land in Westmoreland County.

John and his descendants prospered. Augustine, the father of George, was a man of substance, but his property seems to have gone to the children of his first wife—George's half-brothers, to one of whom, Augustine, went the family home, Wakefield, where the future president was born February 22, 1732. George was the eldest of five children by a second wife, Mary Ball. The death of his father occurred when George was eleven. The mother removed to Fredericksburg where she lived apparently in modest, if not in somewhat straightened circumstances.

George seems to have spent some of his early years before the death of his father at Mt. Vernon, the estate of his half-brother, Lawrence, at whose death this famous piece of property came into his own hands. After the death of his father he lived at Wakefield with Augustine until he was thirteen, going then to Fredericksburg to live with his mother, probably because there was a school there.

Myth has grown up about the few facts and anecdotes of Washington's early boyhood, and whatever foundation such a story as that of the cherry tree may have in fact, the obvious distortion of it to point a moral has quite destroyed its value to the biographer. Of Washington's boyhood we catch only fleeting glimpses; stories of his climbing Natural Bridge, and of his throwing a stone across the Rappahannock River are echoes of his physical strength and fitness. Like most of the boys of his generation he must have known how to use a rifle, how to hunt, how to swim, how to ride a horse, and how to take care of himself in the woods.

At Fredericksburg he attended the school of the Rev. James Mayre. Here it would seem that he made some acquaintance with polite literature, got a smattering of Latin, and was even encouraged to try his hand at making verses, some of which, inspired by young ladies of his acquaintance, have survived. His attention, however, was centered on the more practical subject of mathematics, for there is evidence that he entertained an ambition of a career in the navy. The evidence justifies the conclusion that the thing uppermost in Washington's mind at this time was that he should have to make his own way in the world, and that perhaps his first duty was to prepare himself to help support his mother and the younger children of the family. It was said years afterward by one who remembered him at school that his "industry and assiduity" were "very remarkable," and that while other boys were at play "he was behind the door ciphering." The best evidence, however, of his assiduity is to be seen in his copybooks. From the *Young Man's Companion* he copied carefully and exactly letters, wills, deeds, and other useful documents. In it he studied with diligence such things as how to build a house, how to make cider, how to survey land, how to navigate, and other curious items of useful information, nor did he fail here and there in his copybooks to make after the fashion of most schoolboys, sketches of birds and faces and other shapes which possess the schoolboy's idle brain.

Washington's master was one who firmly believed that "manners maketh man." Part of the education which Washington received was in "Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour"—a hundred and ten of them which he copied carefully in an even, well-written, legible hand. Owen Wister says, "It is a misfortune for all American boys in our schools today, that they should be told the untrue and foolish story of the hatchet and cherry tree, and denied the immense benefit of instruction from George Washington's authentic copybook." The first of the rules is as follows: "Every Action done in Company, ought to be with Some Sign of Respect to those that are Present." Wister believes that from consideration of these "flowed his power of address—the consideration and the sympathy—which won for him—the esteem and devotion of those who could help him." To the present age when such a thing as personal dignity seems to have been forgotten, when men and women of prominence and sometimes of social consequence sell their names to all kinds of advertisers of cigarettes, mouth-wash, and soap for a page of cheap publicity, Washington's rules may seem somewhat stilted, but they engendered in him a respect not only for others but for himself—a respect which in any age is one of the foundation stones of character.

To whatever prospects of a career in the navy Washington entertained, his mother who had a will of her own, put a veto. When he was about sixteen his schooling ended. Now began a period of about five years during which he surveyed the vast holdings of Lord Fairfax and gained, especially in the ways of the frontier, a valuable experience. From this time on the facts of his life are better known. Few men of

Revolutionary fame are better "documented." His diary, kept with care during the years he was in Fairfax's employ and the reports, state papers, and letters of subsequent years fill fourteen large volumes. The knowledge of the frontier which came to him as a surveyor as well as the qualities of personality and character which he displayed led to his being chosen by Governor Dinwiddie for the mission to the French fort on the Ohio with which the forty-five years of public service which he mentions in his *Farewell Address* may be said to begin.

His part in Braddock's ill-fated expedition is well known, and the facts of his service as commander-in-chief of the Continental armies and as President need no rehearsal.

By the time the War for Independence broke out Washington had become a substantial and prosperous landowner. Mt. Vernon had come to him on the death of his half-brother, and he had acquired extensive holdings of his own. His success was in no small measure due to the careful management of his affairs in which he displayed the same attention to detail, the same practical good judgment, and the same assiduity attributed to him in his school days.

The life of no man of Revolutionary fame is more closely identified with that of his country than Washington's. The appelation "The Father of His Country" is no empty phrase. It has been said with truth: "Washington *was* the Revolution." In the war against the mother country he had everything to lose; yet he did not hesitate to calculate the loss. When it became apparent that an appeal to arms alone could settle the quarrel he said, "I will raise one thousand men, enlist them at my own expense, and march myself at their head for the relief of Boston."

Whoever has read his letters written during the dark hours of the War, during the chaotic times of the Confederacy, and during the trying times of the Presidency cannot but be overwhelmed by the magnitude of his services to his country and by the truly great qualities of the man.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE *FAREWELL ADDRESS*

In the *Farewell Address* Washington gave expression to what he called "the disinterested warnings of a parting friend." The *Address* came straight from his heart, born of his solicitude for the young republic. Eight years as its president had acquainted him with the dangers, external and internal, which threatened its welfare; phrase after phrase of the *Address* reflects some incident or condition of affairs which had occupied Washington's attention or aroused his apprehensions in the course of his two terms. An outstanding characteristic of the paper is its foundation in practicality; it is in no wise a theoretical treatise on government; it is throughout based squarely on fact and experience.

Washington had gone into the presidency with the idea of conducting a non-partisan government. He called into his Cabinet men conspicuous for their attachment to the new Constitution and for their past services to the new nation. Among these were Hamilton and Jefferson, his Secretaries of the Treasury and of State respectively. He apparently was confident that all men would now work together for the common good, keeping themselves above party and personal differences, and thinking only of the national welfare.

This whole-hearted coöperation which he had looked for, however, was not forthcoming, either on the part of individuals or communities. He counted perhaps too much on the singleness of attachment to the new government and expected too much of human nature. He found himself perplexed from the outset by personal jealousies and party differences which split his Cabinet and at length forced him into the arms of the Federalists.

From party strife and from foreign policy, hardly ever dissociated from party issues, grew most of the perplexing problems of his administration. About Hamilton and Jefferson grew up the two parties whose divergent views and rancorous animosities so greatly distressed the President. Hamilton, a citizen of the new nation by choice, born of obscure parentage in the Bermudas, with nothing but his abilities to recommend him, became the leader of the conservative, propertied elements who favored strong government and sound financial policy, and who constituted the backbone of the Federalist party. Jefferson, a citizen by birth, a Virginia aristocrat, landlord and slaveholder, was the champion of the more radical democrats, of those who set liberty above property rights, who believed that government best which governed least, and who constituted the strength of the Republican party.

Although almost every measure of the new government occasioned controversy, the chief one about which party warfare raged was Hamilton's financial system. Jefferson wrote, "Hamilton and I were pitted against each other every day in the Cabinet like two fighting-cocks." Washington wrote Jefferson, "I regret, deeply regret, the difference in opinion, which has . . . divided you and another principal officer of the government"; and he tried his best to reconcile them by "mutual yieldings." But the thing which most distressed the President was the rancor and scurrility in which the partisans, particularly of Jefferson, indulged. Hamilton's favorable opinion of the British Constitution and his opinion, which he was not at all careful to conceal, that "the people are a great beast" gave point to these attacks. He was accused of aiming at establishing a monarchy. Nor did Washington himself escape villification. The somewhat formal dignity with which he conducted himself and his sympathy with Hamilton's policy called forth the accusation that he cherished kingly ambitions. It was perhaps this immoderate and unjustified abuse which hurt him more than anything else. Certainly it added greatly to the difficulty of his real problems.

Among the most perplexing problems which confronted the new government were those growing out of foreign relations. Along our northern border England still held a number of frontier posts and she steadily refused to open the ports of the West Indies to American ships. In the Southwest Spain still held Louisiana, blocking the mouth of the Mississippi and making it impossible for the communities of the Southwest to get an outlet to the sea. Spain, moreover, like England, refused to open the ports of her colonies to the Americans. When in 1786 Jay had negotiated a treaty with Spain to open these ports but failed at the same time to secure an outlet at New Orleans the western communities interpreted it to mean that the commercial interests of the East cared only for their own welfare. Disaffection, born of this proposed treaty of 1786, survived in the Southwest and under the new government led to a movement on the part, notably of the inhabitants of Kentucky to threaten setting up an independent government, and a similar cry of sectional favoritism went up when Jay negotiated the treaty of 1796 with England.

By far the most vexatious of the problems arising from foreign relations which confronted Washington grew out of the French Revolution. To begin with, there was a strong natural sympathy between the Republicans and the revolutionists. Men like Tom Paine, for example, whose famous pamphlet *Common Sense* had been powerful in creating sentiment for independence in 1775, went to France to cast their lot with the French republicans. In 1793, when the excesses of the Revolution led to war between France and England, Washington issued a proclamation of neutrality. Hamilton and Jefferson differed on the authority of the President to take this step and the latter endeavored to make a political issue of it in the House. Matters might have ended here but for the activities of Citizen Genet, the ambassador from the French Republic. Genet, whose arrival had been the signal for an outburst of enthusiastic republicanism throughout the country, soon engaged in activities which threatened to throw us into a war with England and led to a great deal of criticism of Washington's proclamation of neutrality. Furthermore, the republican ardor which his coming had stirred up was not without grave consequences in domestic affairs. Throughout the country, especially in Pennsylvania, were formed a number of so-called "Democratic Societies" after the model of the French clubs of the day. The Federalists in general and even Washington were convinced that the Whiskey Insurrection was the first fruit of these Democratic Societies. The action of the Republicans whose passionate attachment to France seemed to Washington to displace their loyalty to America without doubt inspired that passage in the *Farewell Address* in which he warned his countrymen against "inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachment to others."

The letters of Washington during these years reflect the growing concern which all these sectional and party jealousies gave him. His experience was sufficient to convince him of the baneful effects of party, for he had had abundant opportunity to see its consequences in domestic and in foreign affairs. Having as he did, only the welfare of his country at heart and knowing from experience how difficult a task it was to guide the destinies of the Republic, it was with a genuine solicitude that he offered his *Farewell Address* to the people "for their solemn contemplation . . . and . . . frequent review."

THE ORIGIN AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE *ADDRESS*

In the preparation of the *Farewell Address,* Washington had the assistance of both Madison and Hamilton. It is clear, however, that what both of these men did was really no more than what might be intrusted to a competent secretary. In May, 1792, when Washington contemplated retiring from the Presidency, he wrote Madison asking him to prepare a Valedictory Address "expressing in plain and modest terms, that, having been honored with the Presidential chair, and to the best of my abilities contributed to the organization and administration of the government, that having arrived at a period of life when the private walks of it in the shades of retirement become necessary, . . . I take leave of them as a public man." Madison prepared a draft of such an address but of course it was not used. It was quite characteristic of Washington that he should save this unused address. In May, 1796, he had some conversation with Hamilton about the preparation of the address which he finally gave to the public and Hamilton prepared a first draft. Washington gave to Hamilton, Madison's draft and also a paper entitled "Hints and Heads of Topics" which was to be a kind of outline for Hamilton. After several letters on the matter in the course of which Washington made a number of suggestions and corrections, a draft of the *Farewell Address* as it now stands was produced.

To say that Hamilton wrote an address for Washington to deliver is no more true than to say that a stenographer who takes a letter is the author of it. The opening paragraphs of the *Address* owe something to Madison. It was Washington, however, who carefully revised and criticized what Hamilton wrote. Washington who was really a most diffident person was well aware that his grammar and his spelling were his weak points. It would be interesting to know to what extent this diffidence was responsible for his asking Madison and Hamilton to do the actual phrasing of the *Address.*

On the question: Was Washington the author of his *Farewell Address,* see the *Forum,* Volume 27, pages 145–155.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THE *ADDRESS*

PART I

Does Washington feel that he is neglecting his country by refusing to be a candidate for a third term? Has his example established a powerful tradition in American public life? Compare his declination with that of former President Coolidge. Are there any other evidences than his present declaration which prove that he was "reluctantly drawn" from retirement? Why does he feel that he is entitled to withdraw at this time? Was Washington supported by the "steadfast confidence" of the nation? What personal characteristics does he exhibit in the first part of the *Address?* What are his wishes for the country which called him "father"?

PART II

Had Washington any reason to suppose that his counsels would be given a hearing by his countrymen? Had the unity of government, which he considers so essential, always been "dear" to them? Why does Washington emphasize the importance of national unity? Have Americans to-day "the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles"? What are some of the causes which have produced these changed conditions? Are common dangers the only forces adequate to unite peoples? Has Washington any reason for mentioning the various sections of the country by name, and for pointing out to them the advantages of a "Union of the whole"? In warning against an "unnatural connection" has he any particular "foreign power" in mind?

List the advantages of union which Washington sets forth. Can you add to them? Was there at the time doubt "whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere"? Is there to-day? Washington terms the American Union an "experiment." Has it emerged from that state, or is it still an experiment? Is there still "reason to distrust the patriotism of those who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands"?

PART III

What serious danger to the Union does Washington foresee? Does he seem to look with favor on party differences? Do sectional differences make themselves felt in American public life to-day? How? Explain the significance of the reference to the treaties with Great Britain and Spain. Is Washington here trying to convince the people of the Mississippi region of the benefits of these treaties? What was the "first essay" (or attempt) at government which had preceded the adoption of the Constitution? Did it work? Is obedience to the provisions of the Constitution as "sacredly obligatory" upon us to-day as it was in Washington's time? Are all its provisions equally to be obeyed? Can you cite any modern instances of widespread violation of any of these provisions? Can this ever be justified? Can you explain a particular "obstruction to the execution of the laws" which may have caused Washington to insert a paragraph in this portion of the *Address?*

PART IV

Is Washington opposed to all change in the Constitution? Or merely to certain forms of change? Or change at that particular time? Cite some important changes which have been made in this document since his time. Would he have approved of any or all of them? Is the Constitution, in your opinion, too difficult to amend? Or is this an advantage? Explain the process of amendment. Can an amendment, once adopted, be repealed? If so, how? Is there at present any movement looking toward additional amendments, or the repeal of existing portions of the Constitution?

PART V

Are Washington's words to be here interpreted as a warning against political parties? What was the political situation at this time? What was Washington's attitude toward political parties? What is the present attitude? Contrast the party situation in the United States with that in certain European countries. Which is better? Why? Does the

United States need a new alignment of political parties? Why? Is this, in your judgment, likely to take place within the near future? Is it now taking place by slow evolution? Does party feeling run as high as it used to? Does it run high enough?

Part VI

Is the love of power universal, as Washington suggests? And do those who exercise it tend to abuse it? Is political power the only kind which is exercised to-day? Have the checks upon the abuse of power devised by the makers of the Constitution always operated in the manner they intended? Has the power of the executive grown disproportionately great? Has the judicial branch arrogated to itself any powers not contemplated in the Constitution? Is there, in general, to-day a tendency toward strong, central governments—possibly dictatorships—or toward the diffusion of powers and direct popular government? Cite examples from our own history, and that of other nations.

Part VII

What is the American doctrine of the relation of the church and the state? Are we always consistent in our application of this doctrine? Has history any examples of nations which have been hostile to religion? With what results? Is there to-day any state which has adopted an attitude toward religion which is radically different from most? What, in your judgment, will be the outcome of this attitude? Would Washington approve of the agencies of popular education which we have to-day? Have we followed his advice with regard to public credit? Is there a tendency ungenerously to "throw upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear"? How may this be done?

Part VIII

Are religion and morality the only forces which to-day are making for peace? Does war pay? Was former President Wilson echoing Washington's words when he said—prior to America's entrance into the World War—that a nation might be "too proud to fight"? Are we, as a people, prone to any special antipathies or attachments? Have these colored our official actions? Have we seen in our own time any examples of "the insidious wiles of foreign influence"? Summarize Washington's rule for dealing with foreign nations. Have we always followed his counsel in this respect?

Part IX

Have our relations with Europe changed since 1796? Trace this development, and its causes. Is it still true that "Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote relation?" Is our situation as "distant and detached" as when Washington uttered these words? What has brought about the change? Is Washington's counsel an argument for or against our joining the League of Nations? Would it be fair to quote it in a debate on that subject? Despite its failure to join the League, is the United States interesting itself in Europe in any way? How?

Part X

Was neutrality in the European contest of 1793 the wisest course for the United States? Would it have been possible or desirable in 1917? Trace Washington's career as a public servant during the forty-five years which he says he has dedicated to public life. Did he commit "many errors" during his two administrations? Summarize the chief events of his presidency. Is he right in saying that he has served his country with an "upright zeal"? What is the verdict of history upon his public career?

The Address as a Whole

Allowing for differences in the manner of writing between our own and Washington's time, what is the general tone of the *Address?* From the reading of it do you get a portrait of Washington, both as a man and as a public servant? Referring to definite portions of the *Address,* point out the characteristics of Washington which they reveal. Have the counsels of the *Address* proved wise in the light of history? What influence did the publication of the *Address* have upon American policies, either domestic or foreign?

TOPICS FOR ORAL AND WRITTEN COMPOSITION

I Compare or contrast the United States of Washington's day with the same country to-day, touching, among others, upon the following points:
   1. The character and extent of the territory now comprising the United States.

2. The increase in population and its changed character.
3. The changed character of the South and West since 1796.
4. Reasons for the very rapid growth in territory and increase in population.
5. The attitude of the people toward the Federal government.
6. The powers of the Federal government.
7. The spirit in which the Constitution is regarded.
8. The power of the executive.
9. Political parties then and now.
10. The United States in its relations to Europe.

II If Washington were living to-day, what do you think his attitude would be toward the following? Give reasons for your beliefs, referring, where possible, to definite passages in the *Address:*

1. The League of Nations and the World Court.
2. National prohibition of the manufacture and sale of liquor.
3. Legislation in behalf of the farmers of the Middle West.
4. The development of aviation.
5. A Federal department of education.
6. A third term for the president.
7. The army and navy.
8. The entry of the United States into the World War.
9. Philippine independence.
10. The development of the merchant marine.

III Write the Farewell Address which Washington would now compose if he were retiring from the Presidency to-day. (This may be divided among a number of individuals, or assigned to committees.)

IV Do you agree with the following statements made by Washington in the *Farewell Address?* Give your reasons for endorsing or opposing these views:

1. "Foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government."
2. "Let me now . . . warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party."
3. "Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote, relation."
4. "It is our true policy to steer clear of any permanent alliances with any part of the foreign world."
5. "Our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand; neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences."
6. "Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections."

7. "Timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it."
8. "The very idea of the power and right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government."

NEW TYPE TESTS

I A True–False Test

Some of the following statements are true and some false. On a sheet of paper, after the number of each question, write "true" for all those you consider essentially true, write "false" for all those you consider false, either wholly or in part.

1. Washington's advancing years had caused the lessening of his interest in his country's welfare.

2. His fear that he might not be reëlected caused him to retire from public life.

3. Washington viewed his own achievements and powers with extreme modesty.

4. He was conscious of his country's support and was properly appreciative of it.

5. Washington disapproved of general widespread education.

6. He advises his countrymen to cultivate friendship with a few nations.

7. In Washington's judgment we must fulfill all existing treaty obligations.

8. Washington was ambitious of preferment in his country's service.

9. Washington was unpopular with his countrymen, as they thought that he wanted to become king.

10. The advisers whom Washington included in his cabinet were men of inferior ability.

11. Washington was the precise man for the times and the emergency.

12. The character of Washington is distinguished by a lofty and disinterested devotion to his country.

13. Washington served without pay, both as commander-in-chief of the armies in the field and later as President.

14. Washington was a natural aristocrat.

15. Even up to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War most Americans hoped for reconciliation with England.

II. A MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST

Indicate on a sheet of paper the number of the response which best completes the original statement:

1. Washington believed that the spirit of party: (1) should be fostered and kept alive; (2) leads to despotism; (3) is foreign to our nature.

2. In regard to our relations with Europe he advises: (1) friendly coöperation; (2) permanent alliances; (3) a defensive and neutral position.

3. Washington wished to retire from public office because: (1) he wished to enter other work; (2) he feared that the people had tired of him; (3) he felt unequal to the duties.

4. In order to maintain public credit a nation should: (1) use its credit as sparingly as possible; (2) allow war debts to accumulate; (3) issue bonds which posterity will be called upon to pay.

5. The greatest advantage of a close union over a loose association of individual states is: (1) that it provides greater strength; (2) it insures greater security from external danger; (3) it frees the states from wars among themselves.

6. In order to secure the permanence of the Union Washington advocated: (1) that the Constitution be changed in accordance with the demands of the states; (2) that there be strict alliances between the individual states; (3) that the people resist with care the spirit of innovation upon the principles of the Constitution.

7. In counseling his countrymen against antipathies and attachments for foreign nations, Washington had in mind: (1) the feeling in the South that that section should belong to Spain; (2) the pro-English and pro-French parties of Hamilton and Jefferson; (3) the possibility of an alliance with Frederick of Prussia.

8. In warning America against the "insidious wiles of foreign influence" Washington probably had in mind: (1) the activities of "Citizen" Genet; (2) the reception accorded the Jay Treaty; (3) the agitation against the Spanish in the Southwest.

THE FIRST BUNKER HILL ORATION

An Address by Daniel Webster at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument at Charlestown, Massachusetts, on the 17th of June, 1825.

I

This uncounted multitude[1] before me and around me proves the feeling which the occasion has excited. These thousands of human faces, glowing with sympathy and joy, and from the impulses of a common gratitude turned reverently to heaven in this spacious temple of the firmament, proclaim that the day, the place, and the purpose of our assembling have made a deep impression on our hearts.

If, indeed, there be anything in local association fit to affect the mind of man, we need not strive to repress the emotions which agitate us here. We are among the sepulchres of our fathers. We are on ground distinguished by their valor, their constancy, and the shedding of their blood. We are here, not to fix an uncertain date in our annals, nor to draw into notice an obscure and unknown spot. If our humble purpose had never been conceived, if we ourselves had never been born, the 17th of June, 1775, would have been a day on which all subsequent history would have poured its light, and the eminence where we stand a point of attraction to the eyes of successive generations. But we are Americans. We live in what may be called the early age of this great continent; and we know that our posterity, through all time, are here to enjoy and suffer the allotments[2] of humanity. We see before us a probable train of great events; we know that our own fortunes have been happily cast; and it is natural, therefore, that we should be moved by the contemplation of occurrences which have guided our destiny before many of us were born, and settled the condition in which we should pass that portion of our existence which God allows to men on earth.

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[1] Uncounted multitude—According to Edward Everett it was "as great a multitude as was ever, perhaps, assembled within the sound of a human voice." Frothingham says, "This celebration was unequaled in magnificence by anything of the kind that had ever been seen in New England. . . . Delighted thousands flocked into Boston. . . . At about ten o'clock a procession moved from the State House towards Bunker Hill. The military, in their fine uniforms, formed the van. About two hundred veterans of the Revolution, of whom forty were survivors of the battle rode in barouches next to the escort. . . . It was a splendid procession, and of such length that the front nearly reached Charlestown bridge ere the rear had left Boston Common."—*History of the Siege of Boston.*

We do not read even of the discovery of this continent, without feeling something of a personal interest in the event; without being reminded how much it has affected our own fortunes and our own existence. It would be still more unnatural for us, therefore, than for others, to contemplate with unaffected minds that interesting, I may say that most touching and pathetic scene, when the great discoverer of America[3] stood on the deck of his shattered bark, the shades of night falling on the sea, yet no man sleeping; tossed on the billows of an unknown ocean, yet the stronger billows of alternate hope and despair tossing his own troubled thoughts; extending forward his harassed frame, straining westward his anxious and eager eyes, till Heaven at last granted him a moment of rapture and ecstasy, in blessing his vision with the sight of the unknown world.

Nearer to our times, more closely connected with our fates, and therefore still more interesting to our feelings and affections, is the settlement of our own country by colonists from England. We cherish every memorial of these worthy ancestors; we celebrate their patience and fortitude; we admire their daring enterprise; we teach our children to venerate their piety; and we are justly proud of being descended from men who have set the world an example of founding civil institutions on the great and united principles of human freedom and human knowledge. To us, their children, the story of their labors and sufferings can never be without interest. We shall not stand unmoved on the shore of Plymouth,[4] while the sea continues to wash it; nor will our brethren in another early and ancient Colony[5] forget the place of its first establishment, till their river shall cease to flow by it. No vigor of youth, no maturity of manhood, will lead the nation to forget the spots where its infancy was cradled and defended.

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[2] ALLOTMENTS—Portion.

[3] GREAT DISCOVERER OF AMERICA—See Joaquin Miller's famous poem *Columbus* in *PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year*.

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[4] PLYMOUTH—The allusion is to the landing of the Pilgrim fathers on Plymouth Rock in 1620. At Plymouth, in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of this event, Webster delivered his famous oration *The First Settlement in New England*.

[5] COLONY—The allusion here is to Calvert's settlement of Maryland.

II

BUT the great event in the history of the continent, which we are now met here to commemorate, that prodigy of modern times, at once the wonder and the blessing of the world, is the American Revolution. In a day of extraordinary prosperity and happiness, of high national honor, distinction, and power, we are brought together, in this place, by our love of country, by our admiration of exalted character, by our gratitude for signal[1] services and patriotic devotion.

The Society[2] whose organ I am was formed for the purpose of rearing some honorable and durable monument to the memory of the early friends of American Independence. They have thought that for this object no time could be more propitious than the present prosperous and peaceful period; that no place could claim preference over this memorable spot; and that no day could be more auspicious to the undertaking, than the anniversary of the battle which was here fought. The foundation of that monument we have now laid. With solemnities suited to the occasion, with prayers to Almighty God for his blessing, and in the midst of this cloud of witnesses, we have begun the work. We trust it will be prosecuted,[3] and that, springing from a broad foundation, rising high in massive solidity and unadorned grandeur, it may remain as long as Heaven permits the works of man to last, a fit emblem, both of the events in memory of which it is raised, and of the gratitude of those who have reared it.

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[1] SIGNAL—Notable or conspicuous.

[2] SOCIETY—The Bunker Hill Monument Association which held its first meeting June 13, 1823. At its annual meeting in 1824 the Association voted to have an annual celebration and the Hon. Daniel Webster was selected as orator for 1825.

We know, indeed, that the record of illustrious actions is most safely deposited in the universal remembrance of mankind. We know, that if we could cause this structure to ascend, not only till it reached the skies, but till it pierced them, its broad surfaces could still contain but part of that which, in an age of knowledge, hath already been spread over the earth, and which history charges itself with making known to all future times. We know that no inscription on entablatures[4] less broad than the earth itself can carry information of the events we commemorate where it has not already gone; and that no structure, which shall not outlive the duration of letters and knowledge among men, can prolong the memorial. But our object is, by this edifice, to show our own deep sense of the value and importance of the achievements of our ancestors; and, by presenting this work of gratitude to the eye, to keep alive similar sentiments, and to foster a constant regard for the principles of the Revolution. Human beings are composed, not of reason only, but of imagination also, and sentiment; and that is neither wasted nor misapplied which is appropriated to the purpose of giving right direction to sentiments, and opening proper springs of feeling in the heart. Let it not be supposed that our object is to perpetuate national hostility, or even to cherish a mere military spirit. It is higher, purer, nobler. We consecrate our work to the spirit of national independence, and we wish that the light of peace may rest upon it forever. We rear a memorial of our conviction of that unmeasured benefit which has been conferred on our own land, and of the happy influences which have been produced, by the same events, on the general interests of mankind. We come, as Americans, to mark a spot which must forever be dear to us and our posterity. We wish that whosoever, in all coming time, shall turn his eye hither, may behold that the place is not undistinguished where the first great battle of the Revolution was fought. We wish that this structure may proclaim the magnitude and importance of that event to every class and every age. We wish that infancy may learn the purpose of its erection from maternal lips, and that weary and withered age may behold it, and be solaced by the recollections which it suggests. We wish that labor may look up here, and be proud, in the midst of its toil. We wish that, in those days of disaster, which, as they come upon all nations, must be expected to come upon us also, desponding patriotism may turn its eyes hitherward, and be assured that the foundations of our national power are still strong. We wish that this column, rising towards heaven among the pointed spires[5] of so many temples dedicated to God, may contribute also to produce, in all minds, a pious feeling of dependence and gratitude. We wish, finally, that the last object to the sight of him who leaves his native shore, and the first to gladden him who revisits it, may be something which shall remind him of the liberty and the glory of his country. Let it rise! let it rise, till it meet the sun in his coming; let the earliest light of the morning gild it, and parting day linger and play on its summit.

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[3] PROSECUTED—Carried on.

[4] ENTABULATURES—Evidently used here in the sense of a tablet. An entabulature, strictly speaking, is a frieze or cornice.

[5] POINTED SPIRES—An allusion to the churches of Boston.

III

WE LIVE in a most extraordinary age. Events so various and so important that they might crowd and distinguish centuries are, in our times, compressed within the compass of a single life. When it has happened that history has made so much to record, in the same term of years, as since the 17th of June, 1775? Our own revolution, which, under other circumstances, might itself have been expected to occasion a war of half a century, has been achieved; twenty-four sovereign and independent States[1] erected; and a general government established over them, so safe, so wise, so free, so practical, that we might well wonder its establishment should have been accomplished so soon, were it not for the greater wonder that it should have been established at all. Two or three millions of people have been augmented to twelve, the great forests of the West prostrated beneath the arm of successful industry, and the dwellers on the banks of the Ohio and the Mississippi become the fellow-citizens and neighbors of those who cultivate the hills of New England. We have a commerce that leaves no sea unexplored; navies which take no law from superior force; revenues adequate to all the exigencies[2] of government, almost without taxation; and peace with all nations, founded on equal rights and mutual respect.

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[1] TWENTY-FOUR . . . STATES—The number in the Union in 1825.

Europe, within the same period, has been agitated by a mighty revolution,[3] which, while it has been felt in the individual condition and happiness of almost every man, has shaken to the centre her political fabric, and dashed against one another thrones which had stood tranquil for ages. On this, our continent, our own example has been followed, and colonies have sprung up to be nations.[4] Unaccustomed sounds of liberty and free government have reached us from beyond the track of the sun; and at this moment the dominion of European power in this continent, from the place where we stand to the south pole, is annihilated forever.[5]

In the meantime, both in Europe and America, such has been the general progress of knowledge, such the improvement in legislation, in commerce, in the arts, in letters, and, above all, in liberal ideas and the general spirit of the age, that the whole world seems changed.

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[2] EXIGENCIES—Needs.

[3] A MIGHTY REVOLUTION—The French Revolution.

[4] COLONIES . . . TO BE NATIONS—An allusion to the Spanish colonies in South America and the Portuguese colony of Brazil, all of which by 1825 had revolted from Spanish rule and set up republics.

[5] DOMINION . . . IS ANNIHILATED FOREVER—Webster is here referring to the Monroe Doctrine laid down in the President's message to Congress in December, 1823, in which the statement occurs, "The American continents, by the free and independent position which they have assumed and maintained, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers."

IV

YET, notwithstanding that this is but a faint abstract of the things which have happened since the day of the battle of Bunker Hill, we are but fifty years removed from it; and we now stand here to enjoy all the blessings of our own condition, and to look abroad on the brightened prospects of the world, while we still have among us some of those[1] who were active agents in the scenes of 1775, and who are now here, from every quarter of New England, to visit once more, and under circumstances so affecting, I had almost said so overwhelming, this renowned theatre of their courage and patriotism.

VENERABLE MEN! you have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives, that you might behold this joyous day. You are now where you stood fifty years ago, this very hour, with your brothers and your neighbors, shoulder to shoulder, in the strife for your country. Behold, how altered! The same heavens are indeed over your heads; the same ocean rolls at your feet; but all else how changed! You hear now no roar of hostile cannon, you see no mixed volumes of smoke and flame rising from burning Charlestown. The ground[2] strewed with the dead and the dying; the impetuous charge; the steady and successful repulse; the loud call to repeated assault; the summoning of all that is manly to repeated resistance; a thousand bosoms freely and fearlessly bared in an instant to whatever of terror there may be in war and death;—all these you have witnessed, but you witness them no more. All is peace. The heights of yonder metropolis, its towers and roofs, which you then saw filled with wives and children and countrymen in distress and terror, and looking with unutterable emotions for the issue of the combat, have presented you to-day with the sight of its whole happy population, come out to welcome and greet you with a universal jubilee. Yonder proud ships, by a felicity of position[3] appropriately lying at the foot of this mount,[4] and seeming fondly to cling around it, are not means of annoyance to you, but your country's own means of distinction and defense. All is peace; and God has granted you this sight of your country's happiness, ere you slumber in the grave. He has allowed you to behold and to partake the reward of your patriotic toils; and he has allowed us, your sons and countrymen, to meet you here, and in the name of the present generation, in the name of your country, in the name of liberty, to thank you!

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[1] SOME OF THOSE—There were present forty survivors of the Battle of Bunker Hill. It was these whom Webster addressed with the words "Venerable Men!"

[2] THE GROUND—See *The Battle of Bunker Hill,* following this oration.

[3] FELICITY OF POSITION—That is, a position due to happy circumstances.

[4] FOOT OF THIS MOUNT—The allusion is to the Charlestown Navy Yard.

V

BUT, alas! you are not all here! Time and the sword have thinned your ranks. Prescott, Putnam, Stark, Brooks, Read, Pomeroy, Bridge![1] our eyes seek for you in vain amid this broken band. You are gathered to your fathers, and live only

[1] PRESCOTT, PUTNAM, STARK, BROOKS, READ, POMEROY, BRIDGE—Colonel William Prescott of Pepperell, Massachusetts, veteran of the French Wars and the only regular commander of the party who fortified Breed's Hill. See *The Battle of Bunker Hill.* Prescott is said to have been among the last to leave the field.

General Israel Putnam, of Pomfret, Connecticut, another veteran of the French and Indian Wars. When news of the Battle of Lexington reached him he was ploughing. Leaving his plough in the furrow, he rode to Cambridge in one day, a distance of sixty-eight miles. It was he who advised the fortifying of Bunker Hill. Tradition credits him with the famous order: "Aim at the whites of their eyes."

Colonel John Stark, of Londonberry, New Hampshire, who is said to have raised a regiment in one day. He and Colonel James Read commanded the New Hampshire troops in the battle. Major John Brooks, a major in Colonel Bridge's regiment. He was afterwards governor of Massachusetts and the first president of the Bunker Hill Monument Association. Brooks served throughout the Revolutionary War, participating in a number of major engagements. He died in 1825. General Seth Pomeroy, a veteran of the French Wars who fought with a musket among the volunteers at the famous rail fence. He was an elderly man at the time. Ebenezer Bridge was Colonel of a Massachusetts regiment.

to your country in her grateful remembrance and your own bright example. But let us not too much grieve, that you have met the common fate of men. You lived at least long enough to know that your work had been nobly and successfully accomplished. You lived to see your country's independence established, and to sheathe your swords from war. On the light of Liberty you saw arise the light of Peace, like

"another morn,
Risen on mid-noon;"

and the sky on which you closed your eyes was cloudless.

But, ah! Him![2] the first great martyr in this great cause! Him! the premature victim of his own self-devoting heart! Him! the head of our civil councils, and the destined leader of our military bands, whom nothing brought hither but the unquenchable fire of his own spirit! Him! cut off by Providence in the hour of overwhelming anxiety and thick gloom; falling ere he saw the star of his country rise; pouring out his generous blood like water, before he knew whether it would fertilize a land of freedom or of bondage!—how shall I struggle with the emotions that stifle the utterance of thy name! Our poor work may perish; but thine shall endure! This monument may moulder away; the solid ground it rests upon may sink down to a level with the sea; but thy memory shall not fail! Wheresoever among men a heart shall be found that beats to the transports of patriotism and liberty, its aspirations shall be to claim kindred with thy spirit.

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[2] HIM—Dr. Joseph Warren, Boston physician and patriot. Although holding the rank of Major-General, he refused to take command at Bunker Hill. "He mingled in the fight, behaved with great bravery, and was among the last to leave the redoubt. He was lingering, even to rashness in his retreat. He had proceeded but a few rods, when a ball struck him in the forehead and he fell to the ground. . . . The intelligence of his death spread a gloom over the country. . . . General Howe could hardly credit the report that the president of Congress was among the killed and . . . he is said to have declared that this victim was worth five hundred of their men. . . . Eloquence and song . . . have united in eulogy on this illustrious patriot and early martyr to the cause of the freedom of America. No one personified more completely the fine enthusiasm and the self-sacrificing patriotism that first rallied to its support. No one was more widely beloved, or was more highly valued."—Frothingham.

VI

But the scene amidst which we stand does not permit us to confine our thoughts or our sympathies to those fearless spirits who hazarded or lost their lives on this consecrated spot. We have the happiness to rejoice here in the presence of a most worthy representation of the survivors of the whole Revolutionary army.

Veterans! you are the remnant of many a well-fought field. You bring with you marks of honor from Trenton and Monmouth,[1] from Yorktown, Camden, Bennington, and Saratoga. Veterans of half a century! when in your youthful days you put everything at hazard in your country's cause, good as that cause was, and sanguine[2] as youth is, still your fondest hopes did not stretch onward to an hour like this! At a period to which you could not reasonably have expected to arrive, at a moment of national prosperity such as you could never have foreseen, you are now met here to enjoy the fellowship of old soldiers, and to receive the overflowings of a universal gratitude.

But your agitated countenances and your heaving breasts inform me that even this is not an unmixed joy. I perceive that a tumult of contending feelings rushes upon you. The images of the dead, as well as the persons of the living, present themselves before you. The scene overwhelms you, and I turn from it. May the Father of all mercies smile upon your declining years, and bless them! And when you shall here have exchanged your embraces, when you shall once more have pressed the hands which have been so often extended to give succor in adversity, or grasped in the exultation of victory, then look abroad upon this lovely land which your young valor defended, and mark the happiness with which it is filled; yea, look abroad upon the whole earth, and see what a name you have contributed to give to your country, and what a praise you have added to freedom, and then rejoice in the sympathy and gratitude which beam upon your last days from the improved condition of mankind!

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[1] Trenton and Monmouth—Well-known battles of the Revolutionary War in which New England troops participated.

[2] Sanguine—Ardent.

VII

The occasion does not require of me any particular account of the battle of the 17th of June, 1775, nor any detailed narrative of the events which immediately preceded it. These are familiarly known to all. In the progress of the great and interesting controversy, Massachusetts and the town of Boston had become early marked objects of the displeasure of the British Parliament.[1] This had been manifested in the act for altering the government of the Province, and in that for shutting up the port of Boston. Nothing sheds more honor on our early history, and nothing better shows how little the feelings and sentiments of the Colonies were known or regarded in England, than the impression which these measures everywhere produced in America. It had been anticipated, that while the Colonies in general would be terrified by the severity of the punishment inflicted on Massachusetts, the other seaports would be governed by a mere spirit of gain; and that, as Boston was now cut off from all commerce, the unexpected advantage which this blow on her was calculated to confer on other towns would be greedily enjoyed. How miserably such reasoners deceived themselves! How little they knew of the depth, and the strength, and the intenseness of that feeling of resistance to illegal acts of power, which possessed the whole American people! Everywhere the unworthy boon was rejected with scorn. The fortunate occasion was seized, everywhere, to show to the whole world that the Colonies were swayed by no local interest, no partial interest, no selfish interest. The temptation to profit by the punishment of Boston was strongest to our neighbors of Salem. Yet Salem was precisely the place where this miserable proffer was spurned, in a tone of the most lofty self-respect and the most indignant patriotism. "We are deeply affected," said its inhabitants, "with the sense of our public calamities; but the miseries that are now rapidly hastening on our brethren in the capital of the Province greatly excite our commiseration. By shutting up the port of Boston some imagine that the course of trade might be turned hither and to our benefit; but we must be dead to every idea of justice, lost to all feelings of humanity, could we indulge a thought to seize on wealth and raise our fortunes on the ruin of our suffering neighbors." These noble sentiments were not confined to our immediate vicinity. In that day of general affection and brotherhood, the blow given to Boston smote on every patriotic heart from one end of the country to the other. Virginia and the Carolinas, as well as Connecticut and New Hampshire, felt and proclaimed the cause to be their own. The Continental Congress, then holding its first session in Philadelphia, expressed its sympathy for the suffering inhabitants of Boston, and addresses were received from all quarters, assuring them that the cause was a common one, and should be met by common efforts and common sacrifices. The Congress of Massachusetts responded to these assurances; and in an address to the Congress at Philadelphia, bearing the official signature, perhaps among the last, of the immortal Warren,[2] notwithstanding the severity of its suffering and the magnitude of the dangers which threatened it, it was declared that this Colony "is ready, at all times, to spend and to be spent in the cause of America."

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[1] Controversy . . . British Parliament—See the *Historical Background* of Burke's *Speech* in this volume.

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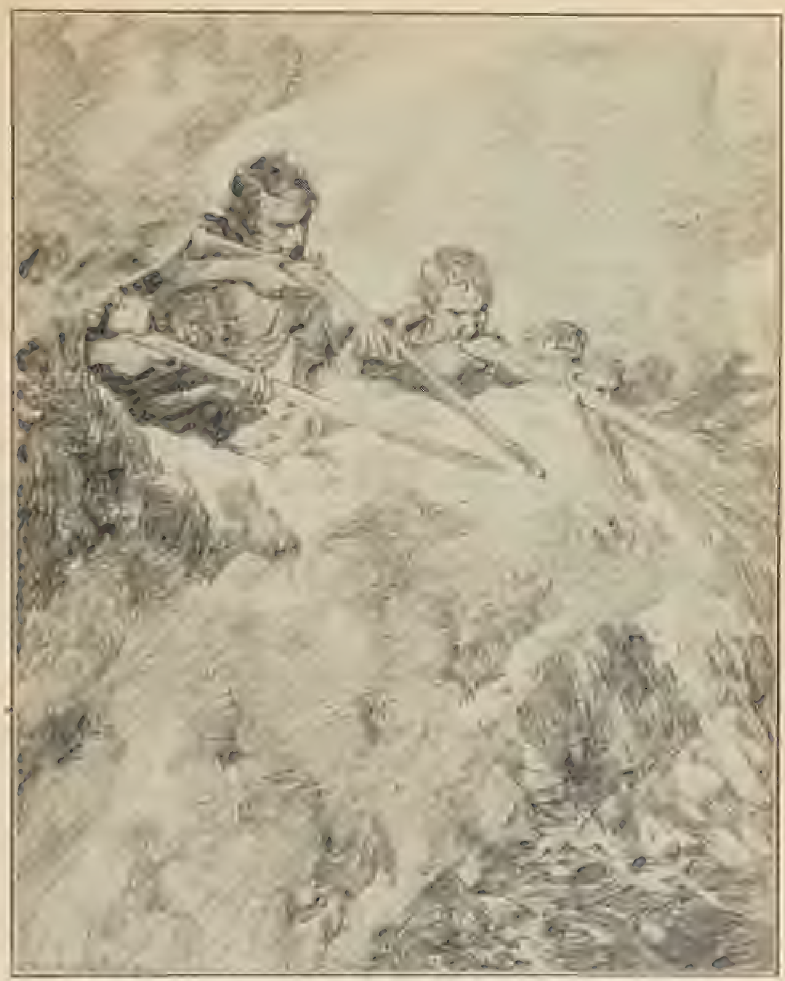
[2] WARREN—Warren was president of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts.

VIII

BUT the hour drew nigh which was to put professions to the proof, and to determine whether the authors of these mutual pledges were ready to seal them in blood. The tidings of Lexington and Concord had no sooner spread, than it was universally felt that the time was at last come for action. A spirit pervaded all ranks, not transient, not boisterous, but deep, solemn, determined,—



The 17th of June saw the four New England Colonies standing here, side by side, to triumph or to fall together;

Webster's *Bunker Hill Oration.*

Totamque infusa[1] per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

War on their own soil and at their own doors, was indeed, a strange work to the yeomanry[2] of New England; but their consciences were convinced of its necessity, their country called them to it, and they did not withhold themselves from the perilous trial. The ordinary occupations of life were abandoned; the plough was stayed in the unfinished furrow; wives gave up their husbands, and mothers gave up their sons, to the battles of a civil war. Death might come in honor, on the field; it might come, in disgrace, on the scaffold.[3] For either and for both they were prepared. The sentiment of Quincy[4] was full in their hearts. "Blandishments," said that distinguished son of genius and patriotism, "will not fascinate us, nor will threats of a halter intimidate; for under God, we are determined, that, wheresoever, whensoever, or howsoever, we shall be called to make our exit, we will die free men."

The 17th of June saw the four New England Colonies[5] standing here, side by side, to triumph or to fall together; and there was with them from that moment to the end of the war, what I hope will remain with them forever,—one cause, one country, one heart.

The battle of Bunker Hill was attended with the most important effects beyond its immediate results as a military engagement. It created at once a state of open, public war. There could now be no longer a question of proceeding against individuals, as guilty of treason or rebellion. That fearful crisis was past. The appeal lay to the sword, and the only question was, whether the spirit and the resources of the people would hold out till the object should be accomplished. Nor were its general consequences confined to our own country. The previous proceedings of the Colonies, their appeals, resolutions, and addresses, had made their cause known to Europe. Without boasting, we may say, that in no age or country has the public cause been maintained with more force of argument, more power of illustration, or more of that persuasion which excited feeling and elevated principle can alone bestow, than the Revolutionary state papers exhibit. These papers will forever deserve to be studied, not only for the spirit which they breathe, but for the ability with which they were written.

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[1] Totamque infusa—This quotation is from Vergil's *Æneid,* vi, 726:

A bright intelligence, which darts
Its influence through the several parts
And animates the whole.

[2] Yeomanry—Sturdy, independent farmers.

[3] Scaffold—Until England granted the colonies a belligerent status those who had taken up arms if captured were of course liable to be hanged as rebels and traitors.

[4] Josiah Quincy (1744–1775)—A Boston patriot and lawyer who denounced the Stamp Act, and in 1774 published his *Observations on the Act of Parliament, Commonly Called the Boston Port Bill.*

[5] Four New England Colonies—Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire. Maine was until 1820 a part of Massachusetts; Vermont was not recognized as a separate colony.

To this able vindication[6] of their cause, the Colonies had now added a practical and severe proof of their own true devotion to it, and given evidence also of the power which they could bring to its support. All now saw, that if America fell, she would not fall without a struggle. Men felt sympathy and regard, as well as surprise, when they beheld these infant states, remote, unknown, unaided, encounter the power of England, and, in the first considerable battle, leave more of their enemies dead on the field, in proportion to the number of combatants, than had been recently known to fall in the wars of Europe.

[6] VINDICATION—The Earl of Chatham in his speech on the motion to withdraw the troops from Boston made in the House of Lords January 20, 1775, said: "When your Lordships look at the papers transmitted to us from America—when you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom, you can not but respect their cause. . . . For solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion . . . no nation, or body of men can stand in preference to the Congress at Philadelphia." Chatham's whole speech is given in *Old South Leaflets,* Vol. 8.

IX

INFORMATION of these events, circulating throughout the world, at length reached the ears of one who now hears me.[1] He has not forgotten the emotion which the fame of Bunker Hill, and the name of Warren, excited in his youthful breast.

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[1] ONE WHO NOW HEARS ME—The allusion is to Lafayette. Frothingham says, "It was a season of unusual prosperity, and the visit of Lafayette—his triumphal progress as the nation's guest—made it a season of national

Sir, we are assembled to commemorate the establishment of great public principles of liberty, and to do honor to the distinguished dead. The occasion is too severe[2] for eulogy[3] of the living. But, Sir, your interesting relation to this country, the peculiar circumstances which surround you and surround us, call on me to express the happiness which we derive from your presence and aid in this solemn commemoration.

Fortunate, fortunate man! with what measure of devotion will you not thank God for the circumstances of your extraordinary life! You are connected with both hemispheres and with two generations. Heaven saw fit to ordain that the electric spark of liberty should be conducted, through you, from the New World to the Old;[4] and we, who are now here to perform this duty of patriotism, have all of us long ago received it in charge from our fathers to cherish your name and your virtues. You will account it an instance of your good fortune, Sir, that you crossed the seas to visit us at a time which enables you to be present at this solemnity. You now behold the field, the renown of which reached you in the heart of France, and caused a thrill in your ardent bosom. You see the lines of the little redoubt thrown up by the incredible diligence of Prescott; defended, to the last extremity, by his lion-hearted valor; and within which the corner-stone of our monument has now taken its position. You see where Warren fell, and where Parker,

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enthusiasm. The directors invited him (August 21, 1824) to Bunker Hill. He accepted the invitation. On viewing the battle-ground, he expressed a lively interest in the proposed monument, and enrolled his name on a subscription list . . . and when Dr. Warren invited him to be present on the succeeding anniversary, he promptly acceded to the wishes of the Association. It was determined to celebrate the Fiftieth Jubilee with great splendor. The renown of the orator, the announcement that the corner-stone would then be laid, and that Lafayette would take part in the ceremony, created high expectations of this celebration."

[2] SEVERE—Grave or solemn.

[3] EULOGY—Praise.

[4] FROM THE NEW WORLD TO THE OLD—After leaving America, Lafayette returned to France where he participated in the events which led up to the French Revolution.

Gardner, McCleary, Moore,[5] and other early partiots fell with him. Those who survived that day, and whose lives have been prolonged to the present hour, are now around you. Some of them you have known in the trying scenes of the war. Behold! they now stretch forth their feeble arms to embrace you. Behold! they raise their trembling voices to invoke the blessing of God on you and yours forever.

Sir, you have assisted us in laying the foundation of this structure. You have heard us rehearse, with our feeble commendation, the names of departed patriots. Monuments and eulogy belong to the dead. We give them this day to Warren and his associates. On other occasions they have been given to your more immediate companions in arms, to Washington, to Greene, to Gates, to Sullivan, and to Lincoln.[6] We have become reluctant to grant these, our highest and last honors, further. We would gladly hold them yet back from the little remnant[7] of that immortal band. *Serus in cœlum redeas.*[8] Illustrious as are your merits, yet far, O, very far distant be the day, when any inscription shall bear your name, or any tongue pronounce its eulogy!

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[5] PARKER, GARDNER, MCLEARY, MOORE—Lieutenant-Colonel Moses Parker, a skillful, brave officer. His knee was fractured, he was taken prisoner, and carried to Boston where he died July 4, 1775. Colonel Thomas Gardner of Middlesex, was struck by a ball which inflicted a mortal wound as he was leading part of his regiment down Bunker Hill to attack the British. Andrew McCleary, a major in Bridge's regiment. During the action he fought with great bravery. Afterwards he rode to Medford to procure bandages for the wounded, and on his return went to reconnoitre the British. On his way to rejoin his men he was killed by a shot from a British frigate. Major Willard Moore of Paxton, wounded twice in action. At the time of the retreat, feeling his wounds to be mortal, he requested his attendants to lay him down, leave him, and take care of themselves.

[6] GREENE, GATES, SULLIVAN, LINCOLN—Nathaniel Greene, a Rhode Island man, brigadier-general, who won distinction in his campaigns in the South. Horatio Gates, brigadier-general, chiefly remembered for his victory over Burgoyne at Saratoga. John Sullivan from New Hampshire, brigadier-general, served in many major campaigns, best remembered perhaps, for his expedition "to chastise and humble the Six Nations" whom he overwhelmed near Elmira, N. Y. Benjamin Lincoln of Hingham, Massachusetts, served with distinction in many major campaigns; made a major-general at the request of Washington.

[7] REMNANT—That is, the forty survivors who were present at Bunker Hill.

[8] *Serus in cœlum redeas*—Late may you return to Heaven.—Horace, *Odes I,* 2:45.

X

THE leading reflection to which this occasion seems to invite us, respects the great changes[1] which have happened in the fifty years since the battle of Bunker Hill was fought. And it peculiarly marks the character of the present age, that, in looking at these changes, and in estimating their effect on our condition, we are obliged to consider, not what has been done in our country only, but in others also. In these interesting times, while nations are making separate and individual advances in improvement, they make, too, a common progress; like vessels on a common tide, propelled by the gales at different rates, according to their several structure and management, but all moved forward by one mighty current, strong enough to bear onward whatever does not sink beneath it.

A chief distinction of the present day is a community of opinions and knowledge amongst men in different nations, existing in a degree heretofore unknown. Knowledge has, in our time, triumphed, and is triumphing, over distance, over difference of languages, over diversity of habits, over prejudice, and over bigotry. The civilized and Christian world is fast learning the great lesson, that difference of nation does not imply necessary hostility, and that all contact need not be war. The whole world is becoming a common field for intellect to act in. Energy of mind, genius, power, wheresoever it exists, may speak out in any tongue, and the world will hear it. A great chord of sentiment and feeling runs through two continents, and vibrates over both. Every breeze wafts intelligence from country to country, every wave rolls it; all give it forth, and all in turn receive it. There is a vast commerce of ideas; there are marts[2] and exchanges for intellectual discoveries, and a wonderful fellowship of those individual intelligences which make up the mind and opinion of the age. Mind is the great lever of all things; human thought is the process by which human ends are ultimately answered; and the diffusion of knowledge, so astonishing in the last half-century, has rendered innumerable minds, variously gifted by nature, competent to be competitors or fellow-workers on the theatre of intellectual operation.

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[1] GREAT CHANGES—The great changes which had been wrought in America constituted one of Webster's favorite themes.

[2] MARTS—Markets.

From these causes important improvements have taken place in the personal condition of individuals. Generally speaking, mankind are not only better fed and better clothed, but they are able also to enjoy more leisure; they possess more refinement and more self-respect. A superior tone of education, manners, and habits prevails. This remark, most true in its application to our own country, is also partly true when applied elsewhere. It is proved by the vastly augmented consumption of those articles of manufacture and of commerce which contribute to the comforts and the decencies of life; an augmentation which has far outrun the progress of population. And while the unexampled and almost incredible use of machinery would seem to supply the place of labor, labor still finds its occupation and its reward; so wisely has Providence adjusted men's wants and desires to their condition and their capacity.

XI

Any adequate survey, however, of the progress made during the last half-century in the polite[1] and the mechanic arts, in machinery and manufactures, in commerce and agriculture, in letters and in science, would require volumes. I must abstain wholly from these subjects, and turn for a moment to the contemplation of what has been done on the great question of politics and government. This is the master topic of the age; and during the whole fifty years it has intensely occupied the thoughts of men. The nature of civil government, its ends and uses, have been canvassed [2] and investigated; ancient opinions attacked and defended; new ideas recommended and resisted, by whatever power the mind of man could bring to the controversy. From the closet [3] and the public halls the debate has been transferred to the field; and the world has been shaken by wars of unexampled magnitude, and the greatest variety of fortune. A day of peace has at length succeeded; and now that the strife has subsided, and the smoke cleared away, we may begin to see what has actually been done, permanently changing the state and condition of human society. And, without dwelling on particular circumstances, it is most apparent, that, from the before-mentioned causes of augmented knowledge and improved individual condition, a real, substantial, and important change has taken place, and is taking place, highly favorable, on the whole, to human liberty and human happiness.

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[1] Polite—That is, the fine arts.

The great wheel of political revolution began to move in America. Here its rotation was guarded, regular, and safe. Transferred to the other continent, from unfortunate but natural causes, it received an irregular and violent impulse; it whirled along with a fearful celerity; till at length, like the chariot-wheels in the races of antiquity, it took fire from the rapidity of its own motion, and blazed onward, spreading conflagration and terror around.[4]

We learn from the result of this experiment, how fortunate was our own condition, and how admirably the character of our people was calculated for setting the great example of popular governments. The possession of power did not turn the heads of the American people, for they had long been in the habit of exercising a great degree of self-control. Although the paramount authority of the parent state existed over them, yet a large field of legislation had always been open to our Colonial assemblies. They were accustomed to representative bodies and the forms of free government; they understood the doctrine of the division of power among different branches, and the necessity of checks on each. The character of our countrymen, moreover, was sober, moral, and religious; and there was little in the change to shock their feelings of justice and humanity, or even to disturb an honest prejudice. We had no domestic throne to overturn, no privileged orders to cast down, no violent changes of property to encounter. In the American Revolution, no man sought or wished for more than to defend and enjoy his own. None hoped for plunder or for spoil. Rapacity was unknown to it; the axe was not among the instruments of its accomplishment; and we all know that it could not have lived a single day under any well-founded imputation of possessing a tendency adverse to the Christian religion.

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[2] CANVASSED—Examined.

[3] CLOSET—Study.

[4] TRANSFERRED . . . TERROR AROUND—An allusion to the excesses of the French Revolution. Read Chapters I and II of Book the Third in Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities,* see *PROSE AND POETRY Tenth Year.*

It need not surprise us, that, under circumstances less auspicious, political revolutions elsewhere, even when well intended, have terminated differently. It is, indeed, a great achievement, it is the masterwork of the world, to establish governments entirely popular on lasting foundations; nor is it easy, indeed, to introduce the popular principle at all into governments to which it has been altogether a stranger. It cannot be doubted, however, that Europe has come out of the contest, in which she has been so long engaged, with greatly superior knowledge, and, in many respects, in a highly improved condition. Whatever benefit has been acquired is likely to be retained, for it consists mainly in the acquisition of more enlightened ideas. And although kingdoms and provinces may be wrested from the hands that hold them, in the same manner they were obtained; although ordinary and vulgar power may, in human affairs, be lost as it has been won; yet it is the glorious prerogative[5] of the empire of knowledge, that what it gains it never loses. On the contrary, it increases by the multiple of its own power;[6] all its ends become means; all its attainments, helps to new conquests. Its whole abundant harvest is but so much seed wheat, and nothing has limited, and nothing can limit, the amount of ultimate product.

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[5] Prerogative—A special and characteristic privilege.

[6] By the multiple of its own power—That is, to infinity. The expression comes from mathematics.

XII

Under the influence of this rapidly increasing knowledge, the people have begun, in all forms of government, to think, and to reason, on affairs of state. Regarding government as an institution for the public good, they demand a knowledge of its operations, and a participation in its exercise. A call for the representative system, wherever it is not enjoyed, and where there is already intelligence enough to estimate its value, is perseveringly made. Where men may speak out, they demand it; where the bayonet is at their throats, they pray for it.

When Louis the Fourteenth[1] said, "I am the State," he expressed the essence of the doctrine of unlimited power. By the rules of that system, the people are disconnected from the state; they are its subjects, it is their lord. These ideas, founded in the love of power, and long supported by the excess and the abuse of it, are yielding, in our age, to other opinions; and the civilized world seems at last to be proceeding to the conviction of that fundamental and manifest truth, that the powers of government are but a trust, and that they cannot be lawfully exercised but for the good of the community. As knowledge is more and more extended, this conviction becomes more and more general. Knowledge, in truth, is the great sun in the firmament. Life and power are scattered with all its beams. The prayer of the Grecian champion,[2] when enveloped in unnatural clouds and darkness, is the appropriate political supplication for the people of every country not yet blessed with free institutions:—

> Dispel this cloud, the light of heaven restore,
> Give me TO SEE,—and Ajax asks no more.

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[1] Louis the Fourteenth (1643–1715)—"Le Grand Monarque," king of France, of a somewhat despotic temperament.

[2] Grecian champion—The incident alluded to comes from the *Iliad*. Hector, the Trojan hero, had slain the Greek Patroclus. In the battle which raged for possession of the body the Greeks could gain no advantage. Jove enveloped the whole face of heaven in a cloud so that Ajax who was looking for a messenger to send to Achilles was unable to see anyone whom he might send. In despair he cried out to Jove the prayer here quoted from Pope's translation of the *Iliad*.

We may hope that the growing influence of enlightened sentiment will promote the permanent peace of the world. Wars to maintain family alliances, to uphold or to cast down dynasties,[3] and to regulate successions to thrones,[4] which have occupied so much room in the history of modern times, if not less likely to happen at all, will be less likely to become general and involve many nations, as the great principle shall be more and more established, that the interest of the world is peace, and its first great statute, that every nation possesses the power of establishing a government for itself. But public opinion has attained also an influence over governments which do not admit the popular principle into their organization. A necessary respect for the judgment of the world operates, in some measure, as a control over the most unlimited forms of authority. It is owing, perhaps, to this truth, that the interesting struggle of the Greeks[5] has been suffered to go on so long, without a direct interference, either to wrest that country from its present masters, or to execute the system of pacification by force; and, with united strength, lay the neck of Christian and civilized Greek at the foot of the barbarian Turk. Let us thank God that we live in an age when something has influence besides the bayonet, and when the sternest authority does not venture to encounter the scorching power of public reproach. Any attempt of the kind I have mentioned should be met by one universal burst of indignation; the air of the civilized world ought to be made too warm to be comfortably breathed by any one who would hazard it.

It is, indeed, a touching reflection, that, while, in the fullness of our country's happiness, we rear this monument to her honor, we look for instruction in our undertaking[6] to a country which is now in fearful contest, not for works of art or memorials of glory, but for her own existence. Let her be assured, that she is not forgotten in the world; that her efforts are applauded, and that constant prayers ascend for her success. And let us cherish a confident hope for her final triumph. If the true spark of religious and civil liberty be kindled, it will burn. Human agency cannot extinguish it. Like the earth's central fire, it may be smothered for a time; the ocean may overwhelm it; mountains may press it down; but its inherent and unconquerable force will heave both the ocean and the land, and at some time or other, in some place or other, the volcano will break out and flame up to heaven.

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[3] DYNASTIES—Royal families.

[4] TO REGULATE SUCCESSIONS TO THRONES—Such as the wars of the Spanish and Austrian Successions, known in America as Queen Anne's and King George's Wars, respectively.

[5] STRUGGLE OF THE GREEKS—The struggle of the Greeks to throw off the yoke of Turkey, then in progress. The speech, in fact, which Webster always held to be his best was one he made as a member of the House in 1824 in support of a motion to send a commissioner to Greece.

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[6] We look for instruction in our undertaking—An allusion to the great architecture of classic Greece. Frothingham says, "A premium of $100 was offered for the best design. . . . There was much discussion as to the most appropriate form to adopt. . . . At length the choice was narrowed down to two forms, the column and the obelisk. . . . It was then voted to adopt the form of an obelisk, as being most simple and imposing, the most congenial to our republican institutions, and the most appropriate to the character of the event to be commemorated [!]" Thus the design came not from Grecian, but from Egyptian architecture.

XIII

Among the great events of the half-century, we must reckon, certainly, the revolution of South America;[1] and we are not likely to overrate the importance of that revolution, either to the people of the country itself or to the rest of the world. The late Spanish colonies, now independent states, under circumstances less favorable, doubtless, than attended our own revolution, have yet successfully commenced their national existence. They have accomplished the great object of establishing their independence; they are known and acknowledged in the world; and although in regard to their systems of government, their sentiments on religious toleration, and their provision for public instruction, they may have yet much to learn, it must be admitted that they have risen to the condition of settled and established states more rapidly than could have been reasonably anticipated. They already furnish an exhilarating example of the difference between free governments and despotic misrule. Their commerce, at this moment, creates a new activity in all the great marts of the world. They show themselves able, by an exchange of commodities, to bear a useful part in the intercourse of nations.

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[1] Revolution of South America—Between 1806 and 1824 the Spanish colonies in South America had thrown off the yoke of the mother country.

A new spirit of enterprise and industry begins to prevail; all the great interests of society receive a salutary impulse; and the progress of information not only testifies to an improved condition, but itself constitutes the highest and most essential improvement.

When the battle of Bunker Hill was fought, the existence of South America was scarcely felt in the civilized world. The thirteen little colonies of North America habitually called themselves the "continent." Borne down by colonial subjugation, monopoly, and bigotry, these vast regions of the South were hardly visible above the horizon. But in our day there has been, as it were, a new creation. The southern hemisphere emerges from the sea. Its lofty mountains begin to lift themselves into the light of heaven; its broad and fertile plains stretch out, in beauty, to the eye of civilized man, and at the mighty bidding of the voice of political liberty the waters of darkness retire.

And now, let us indulge an honest exultation in the conviction of the benefit which the example of our country has produced, and is likely to produce, on human freedom and human happiness. Let us endeavor to comprehend in all its magnitude, and to feel in all its importance, the part assigned to us in the great drama of human affairs. We are placed at the head of the system of representative and popular governments. Thus far our example shows that such governments are compatible,[2] not only with respectability and power, but with repose, with peace, with security of personal rights, with good laws, and a just administration.

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[2] COMPATIBLE—Congruous, not inconsistent with.

XIV

We are not propagandists. Wherever other systems are preferred, either as being thought better in themselves, or as better suited to existing conditions, we leave the preference to be enjoyed. Our history hitherto proves, however, that the popular form is practicable, and that with wisdom and knowledge men may govern themselves; and the duty incumbent[1] on us is to preserve the consistency of this cheering example, and take care that nothing may weaken its authority with the world. If, in our case, the representative system ultimately fails, popular governments must be pronounced impossible. No combination of circumstances more favorable to the experiment can ever be expected to occur. The last hopes of mankind, therefore, rest with us; and if it should be proclaimed, that our example had become an argument against the experiment, the knell of popular liberty would be sounded throughout the earth.

These are excitements to duty; but they are not suggestions of doubt. Our history and our condition, all that is gone before us, and all that surrounds us, authorize the belief, that popular governments, though subject to occasional variations, in form perhaps not always for the better, may yet, in their general character, be as durable and permanent as other systems. We know, indeed, that in our country any other is impossible. The principle of free governments adheres to the American soil. It is bedded in it, immovable as its mountains.

And let the sacred obligations which have devolved on this generation, and on us, sink deep into our hearts. Those who established our liberty and our government are daily dropping from among us. The great trust now descends to new hands. Let us apply ourselves to that which is presented to us, as our appropriate object. We can win no laurels in a war for independence. Earlier and worthier hands have gathered them all.

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[1] Incumbent—Obligatory.

Nor are there places for us by the side of Solon,[2] and Alfred,[3] and other founders of states. Our fathers have filled them. But there remains to us a great duty of defense and preservation; and there is opened to us, also, a noble pursuit, to which the spirit of the times strongly invites us. Our proper business is improvement. Let our age be the age of improvement. In a day of peace, let us advance the arts of peace and the works of peace. Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered. Let us cultivate a true spirit of union and harmony. In pursuing the great objects which our condition points out to us, let us act under a settled conviction, and an habitual feeling, that these twenty-four States are one country. Let our conceptions be enlarged to the circle of our duties. Let us extend our ideas over the whole of the vast field in which we are called to act. Let our object be, OUR COUNTRY, OUR WHOLE COUNTRY, AND NOTHING BUT OUR COUNTRY. And, by the blessing of God, may that country itself become a vast and splendid monument, not of oppression and terror, but of Wisdom, of Peace, and of Liberty, upon which the world may gaze with admiration forever!

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[2] SOLON—A statesman of ancient Athens whose system of laws earned him the title of "the lawgiver."

[3] ALFRED—King Alfred who welded the Saxons into a kingdom in the ninth century.

DANIEL WEBSTER

(1782–1852)

WHEN Webster delivered his famous Bunker Hill Oration he was on the threshold of his great career in the Senate of the United States where he took his seat in January, 1828. At that time he was the foremost figure in New England. In 1824 he had been reëlected to Congress by the almost unanimous vote of 4,000 out of 5,000, a "remarkable indication of the public favor" in which he was held.

The First Bunker Hill Oration echoes the sentiment which found expression in one of the most dramatic of Webster's great orations, the reply to Hayne made in the Senate in 1830, the closing words of which are familiar to every one who knows anything of their author—LIBERTY AND UNION, NOW AND FOREVER, ONE AND INSEPARABLE! It was this same sentiment which prompted him to support the Compromise of 1850 in the famous speech of the 7th of March of that year. How much the cause of Union owed to Webster cannot be estimated. In the dark days of the Civil War the sentiment which supported Lincoln in his policy of preserving the Union must in no small measure be considered the result of Webster's great speeches, made in the days when oratory was admired and read and discussed throughout the land. Writing shortly after Webster's death in 1852, General S. T. Lyman, a friend of Webster's said, "A more thorough American never trod the continent than Daniel Webster. He loved his country; . . . he reverenced the Constitution which gave it national being and position in the view of the world; and he devoted all the energies of his life to its defense against whatever threatened, from any quarter, to weaken its foundations or impair its strength."

Webster was born January 18, 1782, the ninth child in a family of ten, in the town of Salisbury, New Hampshire. His father, Ebenezer, a captain of Minute Men and a veteran of the Revolution, after the war, built a log cabin in the New Hampshire wilderness "at a period so early, as that when the smoke first rose from its rude chimney and curled over the frozen hills, there was no similar evidence of a white man's habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada." The elder Webster was, "a man of strong, good sense; he read much, and was thoroughly acquainted with the Constitution of the States and of the United States."

Anecdotes and stories of Webster's boyhood are fairly numerous. "He rode the horse in ploughing furrows between rows of corn; he raked the hay, followed the reapers and bound up the wheat as they cut it; he drove the cows to their pastures in the morning and home again at night. . . . During the season for 'haying and harvesting,' Daniel always staid from school, . . . and went into the fields with the men. . . . With his straw hat, his 'tow frock and trousers,' his rake or sickle in hand, he worked from morning till night." He is said always to have had a strong propensity for outdoor recreation. As a boy his health does not appear to have been rugged, but he seems early to have shown an aptitude for learning. His mother and sister taught him to read at so early an age that he never knew the time when he could not peruse the Bible with ease. He attended intermittently the common schools of the district where he learned the fundamental subjects.

Webster himself is the authority for the story that after the Constitution had been adopted, as its good results became apparent, people began to read and venerate it. It was printed in all forms and widely circulated. The first time that he saw it, he found it printed on some cotton handkerchiefs at a neighboring store. He paid all the money in his purse for one handkerchief and carried it home; and on the same afternoon read and reread it. Like Lincoln, who as a young man studied the Constitution carefully, Webster may be said to have drawn all his political sentiments from it.

When Webster was about thirteen years old there came to reside in the town a young lawyer who boarded with the Webster family. It was he who put into Webster's hands the first Latin grammar which the boy had ever seen, and who, impressed by the boy's ability at learning Latin, urged upon his father the advisability of sending him to school. Accordingly in 1796 Webster set out in a new home-made suit for Phillips-Exeter Academy. During the nine months he spent here he showed aptitude in study but was conspicuous for his inability to speak in public. Upon his return home he taught school for a time in the course of which he attracted the attention of the Rev. Samuel Wood, one of the trustees of Dartmouth, who encouraged him to prepare to go to college. He completed his preparation by himself and entered Dartmouth in 1797, where he distinguished himself in scholarship and earned a reputation as an orator.

His first public oration was "Pronounced at Hanover . . . the 4th of July, 1800." Like the early attempts of Abraham Lincoln, the speech is liberally besprinkled with extravagant phrases. "Columbia," said the youthful orator, "stoops not to tyrants; her spirit will never cringe to France; neither a supercilious five-headed Directory, nor the gasconading pilgrim of Egypt, will ever dictate terms to sovereign America. The thunder of our cannon shall insure the performance of our treaties, and fulminate destruction on Frenchmen, till the ocean is crimson with blood, and gorged with pirates!"

After graduation from college he taught a time at Fryeburg, Maine, for $350 a year, saving his money to enable him to go on with the study of law. He served his term in a Boston law office and was admitted in 1805, practicing at Boscawen and Portsmouth until 1816. In 1813 he first took his seat in the House, where as a staunch Federalist he seems to have been some embarrassment to the Madison administration in its prosecution of the War. In 1816 he contemplated moving his office to New York City but finally chose Boston. The removal cost him his seat in Congress but in 1822 he was elected from Boston. From this time forward he was continuously in the public service as Congressman, Senator, or Secretary of State. In the latter capacity he served under Harrison, Tyler, and Fillmore.

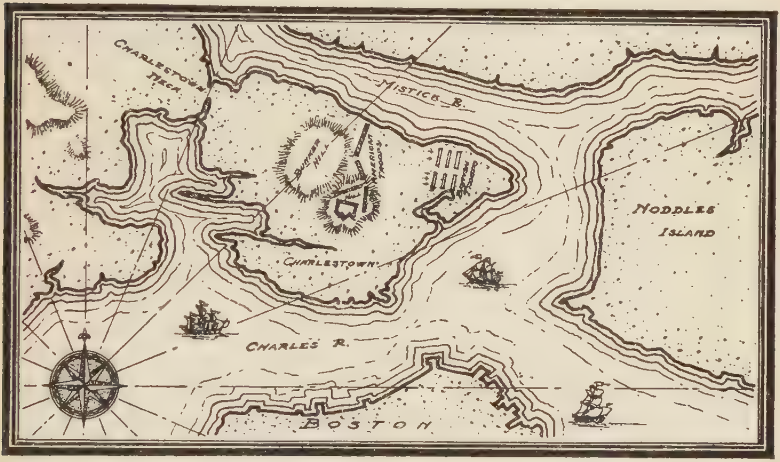
To follow Webster's public career in detail requires a somewhat extensive acquaintance with party conditions as they existed between 1830 and 1850. The important service that Webster rendered to the nation was his defense of the Constitution and the Union. As a Congressman he lent his support to the program of internal improvements feeling that improved communications would "bind the Republic together." In the great debates with Hayne and Calhoun again and again his strong Union sentiment finds expression. "One Country, One Constitution, One Destiny," was his favorite theme.

Webster's last great oration, and by some considered the greatest of his career, was the famous "Seventh of March Speech" in support of the Compromise of 1850. To New England which had delighted to honor him this speech seemed little short of treason, for New England had by this time become strongly abolitionist in sentiment. "Webster," said Sumner, "has placed himself in the dark list of apostates"; and Theodore Parker could compare him to no one but Benedict Arnold. Whittier's withering poem *Ichabod* had Webster for its subject. Yet Webster's support of the Compromise of 1850 was precisely what one might expect of him. He was then an old man. Throughout his long life the "Union—One and Inseparable" had been the aim of all his statesmanship. In 1850 it seemed to him, as it seemed to thousands of his countrymen, that the Compromise Bill would reconcile North and South and strengthen the Union which he so dearly loved. And there is substantial opinion to support the belief that had it not been for the meddling ambitions of Stephen A. Douglas, the Compromise might have stood and the Civil War averted.

The great ambition of Webster's closing years was to be President of the United States. He seems to have been confident of receiving the Whig nomination in 1852 and it has been generally supposed that the chagrin at the loss of it hastened his death which occurred October 24, 1852.

THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL

After the battles at Lexington and Concord the British retired to Boston where they were surrounded by the colonists. Rumors that the British intended to make a sally were frequent and not without foundation. Reports of the designs of the British commander found their way to the American camp, and measures were planned to counteract them. It was determined to take possession of Bunker Hill and also of Dorchester Heights, for the colonists learned that General Gage had fixed upon the night of June 18th to take possession of Dorchester Heights himself. The Committee of Safety then resolved to fortify and defend Bunker Hill in Charlestown and also the hills on Dorchester Heights.



The Battle of Bunker Hill

The pear-shaped peninsula of Charlestown lies opposite the north part of Boston, separated from it by the Charles River. It is about a mile in length from north to south and its greatest breadth, across from Boston, about half a mile, whence it gradually becomes narrower until it makes an isthmus called The Neck, connecting it with the mainland. The Mystic, or Medford, River is on the east side and the Charles River on the south and west sides. Bunker Hill begins at the isthmus and rises gradually for about three hundred yards forming a round smooth hill sloping on two sides toward the water and connected by a ridge of ground on the south with Breed's Hill. Bunker Hill is about 110 feet high and Breed's Hill 75 feet. A highway ran from Bunker Hill to Moulton's Point at the southeast corner of the peninsula.

On Friday the 16th of June measures were taken to fortify Bunker Hill. A detachment placed under the command of Colonel William Prescott of Pepperell was ordered to build the fortifications but a position nearer Boston on Breed's Hill seemed better adapted to the object of the expedition since Bunker Hill lay behind Breed's Hill and might if fortified cover a retreat. During the night entrenchments about six feet high were raised and a redoubt constructed on Breed's Hill but no fortifications were thrown up on Bunker Hill.

June 17th was a hot and oppressive day. In the morning the British were observed to be in motion in Boston and during the forenoon a flood-tide enabled the British to bring floating batteries to play on the entrenchments. In the meantime General Gage had completed his preparations for the attack. About 12 o'clock several regiments marched through the streets of Boston to their places of embarkation and British men-of-war in the Charles River opened fire to cover their movements. The British landed in good order at Moulton's Point about 1 o'clock. The colonists now hastily constructed a breastwork along the line of a fence which ran from the redoubt along the base of Bunker Hill to the Mystic River.

Sometime after 3 o'clock the British advanced, General Howe with the right wing against the fence, and General Pigot with the left wing against the breastwork and the redoubt. The troops moved forward slowly and the Americans coolly awaited their approach, holding their fire until the British were within ten or twelve rods when they opened on them with terrible execution, forcing them to retreat. The American volunteer saw the veterans of England fly before his fire and felt a new confidence in himself. General Howe in a short time rallied his troops and ordered another assault. Charlestown in the meantime had been set on fire, but the burning of the town neither intimidated the Americans nor covered the attack on their lines for the wind blew the smoke so as to leave a clear view of the British approach. A second time the British were repulsed.

Exasperated at the repulses of his troops and against the advice of some of his officers, Howe resolved on another attack, concentrating this time on the redoubt and making better use of his artillery. Howe's tactics did not escape the keen and anxious eye of Prescott whose men were now short of ammunition. The defenders of the redoubt, their ammunition exhausted, were unable to stop the advance, and the redoubt was successfully scaled. The party along the fence maintained their ground with firmness covering the retreat from the redoubt. On the brow of Bunker Hill the Americans made a last stand. General Putnam here rode to the rear of the retreating troops and regardless of the balls flying about him urged them to renew the fight. Here, too, the veteran Pomeroy with his shattered musket in his hand and face to face with the foe endeavored to rally his men, but it was not possible to check the retreat. About 5 o'clock the British troops took possession of Bunker Hill.—Abridged and adapted from Frothingham's *History of the Siege of Boston.*

THE NATURE OF AN ORATION

From earliest times the orator has played an influential part in human history. His voice has been raised in the council chamber, beside the bier, and before the battle ground. He has made or averted wars, shaped laws, interpreted events, and awakened men's hopes, aspirations, and fears. In some instances, as in the present one, he has also made literature.

An oration is a formal address, elevated in tone and usually delivered on some notable occasion, such as an anniversary or day commemorative of some historical event. While addressed primarily to the emotions of its hearers, it seeks to find and interpret the special significance of the event which it celebrates.

Webster's oration finds its occasion in the anniversary of the battle of Bunker Hill. After pointing out the full significance of that event, and paying tribute to the men who fought there, the orator seeks to impress his hearers with the necessity of conserving and developing what their forefathers have won. There is an exhortation to a higher type of citizenship based upon a realization of our heritage from the past.

It has been said—and generally with entire truth—that most orations make poor reading. Lacking the compelling force of the orator's magnetic personality, the printed word looks cold and feeble. To this general truth Webster's orations are an exception. Valuable for their lucid exposition of fundamental principles, they are also worth study for their careful construction and for their bold use of rhetorical devices.

In reading the oration it is well to remember constantly that it was composed for oral delivery and not primarily for reading. It will then be understood that the speaker has frequently to repeat a thought which he wishes his hearers to grasp. Since it is impossible for them to turn back to a previous page to review what he has already said and thus understand its bearing upon what he is now saying, it is necessary for the orator to employ this emphasis of repetition. He will not, of course, say the same thing in the same words—that would lead to mere monotony—but will clothe his thought anew, examine it from different angles, furnish it with illustration and example, enforce it with contrast or comparison, and finally come back to a repetition of the thought so that his hearers will be certain to have grasped his meaning.

Then, too, it must be kept in mind that an oration appeals primarily to the emotions, rather than to the intellect. Its purpose is not to inform, instruct, or explain, but to move—to induce in its hearers a state of feeling which may or may not have consequences in action.

Thus the reader of Webster's oration will try to put himself in the mental attitude of the listener. He will try to reconstruct the scene, to hear again the voice of the orator, to feel with the throng its emotional reaction to the occasion.

The reader, however, has some slight advantage over the hearer, for the former can study, if he will, some of the means which the orator employs to make his effects. Thus the sentence structure in an oration is likely to be balanced, each part corresponding to the other. Sharp contrasts, or antitheses, are often employed to heighten the effect. Repetition is deliberately encouraged, as in Webster's use of the pronoun "Him!" in referring to Warren. Phrases will be arranged in the order of increasing emphasis, as "Our country, our whole country, and nothing but our country." Short sentences will succeed long ones in order to furnish a contrast of manner, and to arrest and hold the attention of the hearers.

And because emotion is exhausting, the orator will not attempt to keep his hearers in its grip for long. Quiet passages succeed those in which there has been a definite appeal to sympathy, sorrow, patriotism, anger, or any other consuming passion. This is not alone necessary for both the orator and his hearers, but furnishes the contrast which heightens the emotional passages.

Has oratory declined since Webster moved the "uncounted multitude" before him on Bunker Hill? That suggestion is frequently made. But there is no lack of evidence that audiences still respond to the living voice and compelling personality of the genuine orator. Orations may change, but not oratory. To-day we place a lower value on mere rhetorical devices, on classical quotations, on swelling periods. But the orator who has a noble theme and can present it nobly will not lack for hearers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THE *BUNKER HILL ORATION*

Part I

Note how the orator at once allies himself with his audience, and then tries to bind them all together in a sympathetic appreciation of the occasion. Note the word picture which he draws of Columbus approaching the shores of America. How much does the parallel structure of the sentence add to the effect? Observe the transition by which he brings us closer to modern times. Read aloud the sentence beginning, "We cherish . . ." Is the effect pleasing to the ear? Can you tell why?

Part II

Observe the balanced style in which many of the sentences are constructed. What is the effect which is thus gained? Notice that the disclaimers of purposes which might be ascribed to the building of the Monument come before the avowal of the real purpose. Is there any advantage in this arrangement? Notice the parallelism in form of the sentences beginning, "We consecrate . . ." What effect would this have upon the hearers?

Part III

Does the transition from Part II to Part III seem abrupt? Is there any effect which is thus gained? Can you imagine any difference between the manner which the orator used in the latter part of the preceding section and that which he would employ in the delivery of the first part of this one? What is the reason? Note the effectiveness of the contrast between Europe and America. What type of sentence is employed in the concluding paragraph of this section? Is it appropriate to the style of an oration?

Part IV

Note the effective use of contrast throughout this section. Observe the construction of the sentence beginning, "The ground strewed with the dead and the dying . . ." Note the brevity of the sentence which follows it. Is this part of the orator's technic? Note the construction of the final sentence in this section. What rhetorical principles does it illustrate?

Part V

What effect does Webster gain by mentioning the names of the fallen heroes? Notice that he turns from grief to consolation. What is his purpose in the repeated use of the personal pronoun? Is he successful in it? Notice that Warren's name is never mentioned in this tribute. Why? Does the passage seem over-emotional to modern taste? What would be the manner and tone of the orator in delivering this passage?

PART VI

Observe the transition from the one passage to the other. What effect does the orator gain by the mention of specific battlefields? Can you imagine the tone in which he would pronounce the words, "Veterans of half a century!" Is there any reason for the comparative brevity of this passage? Can emotional tensity be sustained for long periods?

PART VII

Notice that, from among the events which he might have reviewed, Webster chooses only those which illustrate the solidarity of feeling among the colonies. Is there any reason, either in his own philosophy of government, or in the structure of this oration, which might induce him to do this? Is this section more, or less, emotional in tone than the one which preceded it?

PART VIII

Examine the balanced construction of the sentence beginning, "Death might come . . ." Find in this section other examples of rhetorical style. Note that the orator, instead of merely reciting the events of the battle, tries to point out the results of the engagement—its significance—the essential reasons for commemorating it. Note the transitions from one part of the subject to another, as in the sentence beginning, "To this able vindication of their cause . . ." What purpose do they serve? Find other examples in this and other sections.

PART IX

Notice the transition from the preceding section. Is an effect gained by the deliberate omission of Lafayette's name? Observe that he refrains from direct eulogy of Lafayette. Is there any reason, other than the one which he gives, for this restraint on his part? Notice the repetition of "Behold!" together with the parallelism of form in the two sentences.

PART X

Observe the absence of any transition from the preceding section. Since Webster usually employs a transitional passage, is he striving for a deliberate effect in omitting one here? Is there any difference in tone between the preceding section and this one? Examine the means by which the orator repeats—in different form, of course—the ideas expressed in the second and third paragraphs.

PART XI

Note again the effective use of contrast as between the American and European revolutions. Observe that here, as elsewhere, the orator seeks to find the underlying cause, or special significance, of the results which he notes. Note the structure of the sentence beginning, "And although kingdoms . . ." Find other examples of the same structure. Contrast this type of sentence structure with that exhibited in the next sentence beginning, "On the contrary . . ."

PART XII

Observe again the balanced structure of the sentence beginning, "Where men may speak out . . ." Find other examples of this structure. Compare and contrast this particular section of the oration with other and more recent utterances on the same subject. Has public opinion yet attained sufficient force to prevent wars? Can you cite any examples? What agencies for mobilizing this public opinion have we now which did not exist in Webster's time? Do you think he would have approved them?

PART XIII

Why should Webster have devoted part of the oration to the revolutions in South America? Were Americans a hundred years ago more interested in the affairs of other nations than they are to-day? What effect did the Monroe Doctrine have upon the development of South America? Is it in force to-day? Has it ever been challenged? Is there to-day any resentment against it? Examine carefully the structure of the sentence beginning, "Its lofty mountains . . ."

PART XIV

Notice that this section is concerned with the application of the preceding considerations to this particular audience. Why does the orator leave his most impressive message for the end? How would you characterize the tone and spirit of this section? Can you imagine the manner in which the orator delivered it? Does it leave something definite with the audience? Is it a satisfying conclusion?

TOPICS FOR ORAL AND WRITTEN COMPOSITION

I Using suggestions which you have derived from the study of the *Bunker Hill Oration*, outline the address which might be given on one of the following occasions:

1. Presentation to the school of a class gift.
2. Graduation exercises of a high school class.
3. Laying the cornerstone of a new high school building.
4. Dedication of a new high school building.
5. The establishment in your community of a new industry.
6. Unveiling of a tablet or other memorial to some historical event, personage, or group.

II After one of the above topics has been outlined and discussed by the class, it may be written as a project, portions of the address being assigned to individuals or groups.

III Discuss what you believe to be the true significance of one of the following:

1. Memorial Day.
2. Fourth of July.
3. Armistice Day.

IV Compare and contrast the half century following the Battle of Bunker Hill with the half century following the Civil War, touching, among others, upon the following topics: Settlement of the West; development of communications; expansion of commerce; political parties and their principles; diffusion of prosperity; character of the population, etc.

V Imagine yourself a spectator of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Write an eyewitness account of it in a letter to a friend.

VI Perhaps you have paid a visit to the Bunker Hill Monument. Give to your class an account of the visit, including a full description of the Monument, its situation, architecture, and construction.

VII Discuss Webster's contribution to the preservation of the Union.

VIII Recalling Webster's discussion of the principles which won at Bunker Hill and which finally achieved the independence of the colonies, try to analyze the principles which make for success to-day in school, college, business, or your chosen profession.

NEW TYPE TESTS

I A True–False Test

Some of the following statements are true and some false. On a sheet of paper or in your notebook write "True" after the number of each statement that you consider essentially true; write "False" after the number of each statement you consider false, either wholly or in part.

1. The laying of the cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument did not attract as large a crowd as had been anticipated.

2. The Bunker Hill Monument was completed just fifty years after the battle had been fought.

3. At the time this oration was delivered Webster was secretary of state in the cabinet of President Tyler.

4. According to Webster, all Americans feel a personal interest in even so remote an event as the discovery of the continent of North America.

5. No monument, says Webster, can carry information of the Battle of Bunker Hill where it has not already gone.

6. The condition of Europe in the period since the Battle of Bunker Hill has been more fortunate than that of America.

7. Colonel Prescott, who commanded at Bunker Hill, was among those present when Webster delivered his celebrated oration.

8. The "him" whom Webster hails as the "first great martyr in this great cause" was Major Willard Moore.

9. The other colonies hastened to make common cause with Massachusetts when the port of Boston was about to be closed.

10. The news of Lexington and Concord aroused all the colonists to the realization that the quarrel with England would have to be decided by war.

11. The Battle of Bunker Hill created at once a state of open, public war.

12. The Revolutionary state papers deserve study only for the spirit of defiance which they breathe.

13. The distinguished visitor whom Webster addressed directly during the oration was Baron von Steuben.

14. The question of religion, says Webster, is the master topic of the age.

15. The duty of defending and preserving what our fathers won for us is now ours, declares Webster.

II A MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST

Either orally or on paper give the number of the response which best completes each of the following statements:

1. Webster believed that the task of the generation which listened to him was: (1) colonial expansion; (2) improvement of the structure of government; (3) the development of the West.

2. The greater success of the American Revolution as contrasted with the French Revolution was due in large measure to: (1) The fact that it was better planned and organized; (2) the superior character of the Americans; (3) the strong religious feeling which pervaded the American colonies.

3. Webster declared that the chief distinction of his era was: (1) the triumph of knowledge; (2) the development of machinery and manufactures; (3) improvement in the condition of individuals.

4. Webster declared that the object of the Bunker Hill Monument was: (1) to keep alive national hostility; (2) to recall the heroic deeds of those who fought the battle; (3) to keep alive a constant regard for the principles of the Revolutionary War.

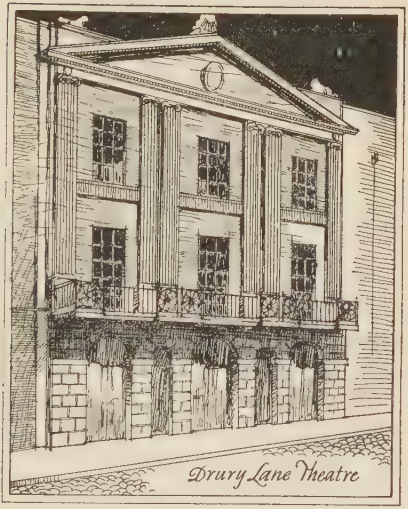
5. The chief effect of the Battle of Bunker Hill was: (1) that it created a state of open, public war with no further possibility of proceeding against individuals as guilty of treason; (2) it stimulated the colonists by the knowledge that they could face British regulars on terms of equality; (3) it united all the colonies in the common cause against the tyranny of excessive taxation.

6. The character of the American people was suited to popular government, according to Webster, because: (1) they were accustomed to representative bodies and the forms of free government; (2) they were fiercely jealous of any encroachments on their liberty; (3) their leaders were determined to secure their independence of English rule.

7. If the American experiment in popular government should fail, it would mean that the system is impracticable everywhere, because: (1) ours is the largest nation which has attempted it; (2) we have been permitted to undertake the experiment without the distraction of foreign wars; (3) no combination of circumstances more favorable to the experiment can ever be expected to occur.

ESSAY ON JOHNSON
AND
ENGLAND IN 1685
[HISTORY OF ENGLAND CHAPTER III]

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY


Drury Lane Theatre

SECTION IV

SAMUEL JOHNSON

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

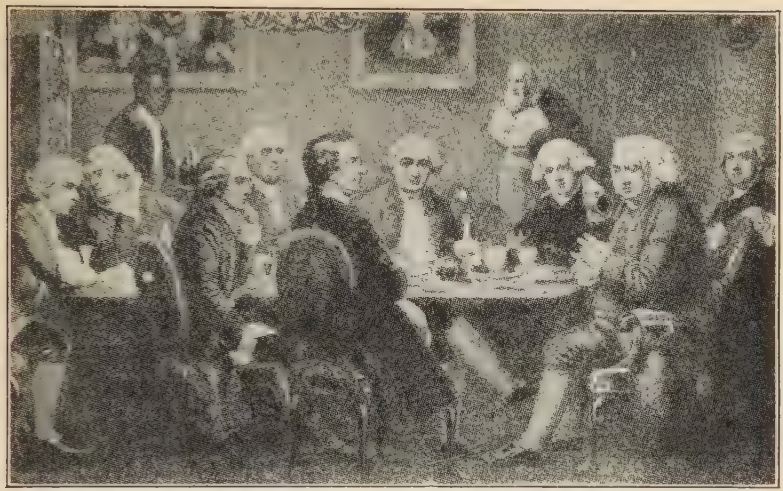
THE ESSAY
Parts I–XXIII 349–402
THE LIFE OF MACAULAY 403
MACAULAY'S STYLE OF WRITING 405
THE FAMOUS LETTER TO CHESTERFIELD 407
JOHNSON AS A CONVERSATIONALIST 408
SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THE ESSAY 409
ORAL AND WRITTEN COMPOSITION TOPICS 415
FOR FURTHER ACQUAINTANCE WITH JOHNSON 415
THE ESSAY IN REVIEW 416

ENGLAND IN 1685

Chapter III of the *History of England*

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

THE CHAPTER 417–452
  THE POPULATION OF ENGLAND 418
  THE REVENUES OF THE KINGDOM 419
  THE ARMY AND THE NAVY 420
  THE EXPENSES OF THE GOVERNMENT 423
  THE PUBLIC RESOURCES—AGRICULTURE 424
  THE PUBLIC RESOURCES—MINERAL WEALTH 425
  RURAL LIFE—COUNTRY SQUIRES 427
  THE MANUFACTURING CENTERS 430
  THE METROPOLIS—LONDON 434
  LONDON—AT NIGHT 436
  LONDON—THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT 437
  LONDON—THE COFFEE-HOUSE 439
  THE HIGHWAYS—MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION 440
  THE ENGLISH INNS 443
  LITERATURE OF THE DAY 444
  LANGUAGES OF SOCIETY 446
  SCIENCE AND ART 448
  THE COMMON PEOPLE 449
MACAULAY'S *History of England* AS LITERATURE 452



Samuel Johnson and his club

SAMUEL JOHNSON *

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

I

SAMUEL JOHNSON, one of the most eminent English writers of the eighteenth century, was the son of Michael Johnson, who was, at the beginning of that century, a magistrate of Lichfield,[1] and a bookseller of great note in the midland counties. Michael's abilities and attainments seem to have been considerable. He was so well acquainted with the contents of the volumes which he exposed to sale, that the country rectors of Staffordshire and Worcestershire thought him an oracle on points of learning. Between him and the clergy, indeed, there was a strong religious and political sympathy. He was a zealous churchman,[2] and,

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* This essay was written for the eighth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica,* published in 1856

[1] LICHFIELD—A cathedral town of Staffordshire in the center of England. A statue of Johnson was set up in 1838 in the square opposite the house where he was born.

[2] CHURCHMAN—Adherent of the established church.

though he had qualified himself for municipal office by taking the oaths to the sovereigns[3] in possession, was to the last a Jacobite[4] in the heart. At his house, a house which is still pointed out to every traveller who visits Lichfield, Samuel was born on the 18th of September, 1709. In the child, the physical, intellectual, and moral peculiarities which afterward distinguished the man were plainly discernible—great muscular strength accompanied by much awkwardness and many infirmities; great quickness of parts,[5] with a morbid propensity to sloth and procrastination; a kind and generous heart, with a gloomy and irritable temper. He had inherited from his ancestors a scrofulous,[6] taint, which it was beyond the power of medicine to remove. His parents were weak enough to believe that the royal touch[7] was a specific for this malady. In his third year he was taken up to London, inspected by the court surgeon, prayed over by the court chaplains, and stroked and presented with a piece of gold[8] by Queen Anne.[9] One of his earliest recollections was that of a stately lady in a diamond stomacher[10] and a long black hood. Her hand was applied in vain. The boy's features, which were originally noble and not irregular, were distorted by his malady. His cheeks were deeply scarred. He lost for a time the sight of one eye, and he saw but very imperfectly with the other. But the force of his mind overcame every impediment. Indolent as he was, he acquired knowledge with such ease and rapidity, that at every school to which he was sent he was soon the best scholar. From sixteen to eighteen he resided at home, and was left to his own devices. He learned much at this time, though his studies were without guidance and without plan. He ransacked his father's shelves, dipped into a multitude of books, read what was interesting, and passed over what was dull. An ordinary lad would have acquired little or no useful knowledge in such a way; but much that was dull to ordinary lads was interesting to Samuel. He read little Greek; for his proficiency in that language was not such that he could take much pleasure in the masters of Attic[11] poetry and eloquence. But he had left school a good Latinist, and he soon acquired, in the large and miscellaneous library of which he now had the command, an extensive knowledge of Latin literature. That Augustan[12] delicacy of taste which is the boast of the great public schools of England, he never possessed. But he was early familiar with some classical writers who were quite unknown to the best scholars in the sixth form[13] at Eton.[14] He was peculiarly attracted by the works of the great restorers of learning.[15] Once, while searching for some apples, he found a huge folio volume of

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[3] OATHS TO THE SOVEREIGNS—After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 when James II was deposed and William and Mary came to the throne, an oath of allegiance to the new sovereign from all persons in public office was required.

[4] JACOBITE—The name by which a partisan of the deposed James II was known. The term comes from *Jacobus,* the Latin for James.

[5] PARTS—Mental faculties.

[6] SCROFULOUS—From scrofula, a tubercular enlargement of the glands, usually those of the neck.

[7] ROYAL TOUCH—From the days of Edward the Confessor it was the custom of English sovereigns to "touch" or lay hands upon those afflicted with disease, in the belief that the royal touch would effect a cure. Johnson is believed to have been the last person to be touched by an English sovereign.

[8] PIECE OF GOLD—It was the custom to present the person touched with a gold piece. The piece given Johnson is now to be seen in the British Museum.

[9] QUEENE ANNE—Daughter of James II, the last of the Stuarts, queen from 1702 to 1714.

[10] STOMACHER—A garment covering the breast and stomach, usually considerably ornamented.

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[11] ATTIC—From Attica, the district of Greece in which Athens was situated. The term as applied to literature refers to the great works produced at Athens, which was the center of Greek culture.

[12] AUGUSTAN—From Augustus, the Roman emperor, during whose reign Latin literature flourished. Vergil, Horace, and other great Roman writers belong to this period. The term Augustan is also sometimes applied in English literature to the age of Pope for the reason that Pope and his contemporaries modeled their works upon the classics of antiquity.

[13] SIXTH FORM—That is, what we should call the sixth class. In England classes do not go by the term of "freshman," etc. The sixth class would correspond to our senior class.

[14] ETON—Eton is one of the great public schools of England. In England the term public school designates in reality a somewhat exclusive private boys' school. Other famous public schools are Harrow and Rugby.

[15] RESTORERS OF LEARNING—Renaissance scholars who revived the study of the ancient classics. Among these were Erasmus, More, Colet, founder of St. Paul's School, and a host of lesser scholars.

Petrarch's[16] works. The name excited his curiosity, and he eagerly devoured hundreds of pages. Indeed, the diction and versification of his own Latin compositions show that he had paid at least as much attention to modern copies from the antique as to the original models.

[16] PETRARCH—An Italian Renaissance scholar and poet, whose sonnets in particular exercised great influence on poetry in England in the fifteenth century.

II

While he was thus irregularly educating himself, his family was sinking into hopeless poverty. Old Michael Johnson was much better qualified to pore upon books, and to talk about them, than to trade in them. His business declined: his debts increased; it was with difficulty that the daily expenses of his household were defrayed. It was out of his power to support his son at either university; but a wealthy neighbor[1] offered assistance, and, in reliance on promises which proved to be of very little value, Samuel was entered at Pembroke[2] College, Oxford. When the young scholar presented himself to the rulers of that society, they were amazed not more by his ungainly figure and eccentric manners than by the quantity of extensive and curious information which he had picked up during many months of desultory, but not unprofitable study. On the first day of his residence, he surprised his teachers by quoting Macrobius;[3] and one of the most learned among them declared that he had never known a freshman of equal attainments.

At Oxford, Johnson resided during about three years.[4] He was poor, even to raggedness; and his appearance excited a mirth and a pity which were equally intolerable to his haughty spirit. He was driven from the quadrangle[5] of Christ Church[6] by the sneering looks which the members of that aristocratical society cast at the holes in his shoes.[7] Some charitable person placed a new pair at his door; but he spurned them away in a fury. Distress made him, not servile, but reckless and ungovernable. No opulent gentleman commoner,[8] panting for one and twenty,[9] could have treated the academical authorities with more gross disrespect. The needy scholar was generally to be seen under the gate of Pembroke, a gate now adornd with his effigy, haranguing a circle of lads, over whom, in spite of his tattered gown[10] and dirty linen, his wit and audacity gave him an undisputed ascendency. In every mutiny[11] against the discipline of the college, he was the ringleader. Much was pardoned, however, to a youth so highly distinguished by abilities and acquirements. He had early made himself known by turning Pope's *Messiah*[12] into Latin verse. The style and rhythm, indeed, were not exactly Virgilian; but the translation found many admirers, and was read with pleasure by Pope himself.

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[1] WEALTHY NEIGHBOR—According to Hawkins, "A neighbouring gentleman, Mr. Andrew Corbet, offered to send Johnson to Oxford to read with his son who had entered Pembroke College in 1727." However, "a disagreement with Corbet followed Johnson's entry in college, and Johnson's supplies from this source were stopped after a time."

[2] PEMBROKE—One of the colleges at Oxford, founded in 1624.

[3] MACROBIUS—An obscure grammarian of the fifth century.

[4] THREE YEARS—Johnson really left the college in December, 1729, after a residence of only fourteen months.

The time drew near at which Johnson would, in the ordinary course of things, have become a bachelor of arts; but he was at the end of his resources. Those promises of support on which he had relied had not been kept. His family could do nothing for him. His debts to Oxford tradesmen were small indeed, yet larger than he could pay. In the autumn of 1731 [13] he was under the necessity of quitting the university without a degree. In the following winter his father died. The old man left but a pittance; and of that pittance almost the whole was appropriated to the support of his widow. The property to which Samuel succeeded amounted to no more than twenty pounds.

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[5] QUADRANGLE—The court or yard of the college.

[6] CHRIST CHURCH—A famous college at Oxford, founded by Cardinal Wolsey in 1517, originally Cardinal College. Macaulay's expression "aristocratical society" is an allusion to the fact that Christ Church was at that time the most fashionable of the Oxford colleges.

[7] SHOES—Boswell says of Johnson: "He was too proud to accept money, and somebody having set a pair of new shoes at his door, he threw them away with indignation."

[8] GENTLEMAN COMMONER—Students who were able to pay their own way through the college and were under no necessity of performing some service in partial payment of their tuition and other expenses.

[9] PANTING FOR ONE AND TWENTY—That is, eager to become of age, and beginning to feel very self-important.

[10] GOWN—In English universities students wear academic gowns.

[11] MUTINY—Johnson said in later years, "Ah, Sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority." That he was a ringleader seems an overstatement.

[12] *Messiah*—A poem by Alexander Pope, the leading poet of the day. Johnson turned this poem into Latin verse as a Christmas exercise.

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[13] AUTUMN OF 1731—Johnson left Oxford December, 1729, but his name remained on the books of Pembroke till October, 1731.

III

His life, during the thirty years which followed, was one hard struggle with poverty. The misery of that struggle needed no aggravation, but was aggravated by the sufferings of an unsound body and an unsound mind. Before the young man left the university, his hereditary malady had broken forth in a singularly cruel form. He had become an incurable hypochondriac.[1] He said long after, that he had been mad [2] all his life, or at least not perfectly sane; and, in truth, eccentricities less strange than his have often been thought grounds sufficient for absolving felons [3] and for setting aside wills. His grimaces,[4] his gestures, his mutterings, sometimes diverted and sometimes terrified people who did not know him. At a dinner table he would, in a fit of absence, stoop down and twitch off a lady's shoe. He would amaze a drawing-room by suddenly ejaculating a clause of the Lord's Prayer. He would conceive an unintelligible aversion to a particular alley, and perform a great circuit rather than see the hateful place. He would set his heart on touching every post in the streets through which he walked. If by any chance he missed a post, he would go back a hundred yards, and repair the omission. Under the influence of his disease, his senses became morbidly torpid,[5] and his imagination morbidly active. At one time he would stand poring on the town clock without being able to tell the hour. At another, he would distinctly hear his mother, who was many miles off, calling him by his name. But this was not the worst. A deep melancholy took possession of him, and gave a dark tinge to all his views of human nature and of human destiny. Such wretchedness as he endured has driven many men to shoot themselves or drown themselves. But he was under no temptation to commit suicide. He was sick of life, but he was afraid of death; and he shuddered at every sight or sound which reminded him of the inevitable hour. In religion he found but little comfort during his long and frequent fits of dejection; for his religion partook of his own character. The light from heaven shone on him indeed, but not in a direct line, or with its own pure splendor. The rays had to struggle through a disturbing medium: they reached him refracted, dulled, and discolored by the thick gloom which had settled on his soul; and, though they might be sufficiently clear to guide him, were too dim to cheer him.

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[1] HYPOCHONDRIAC—One who suffers from a morbid depression of spirits or from imaginary ailments. Johnson especially feared insanity.

[2] MAD—In his *Journal* of a tour to the Hebrides Johnson says that "a vile melancholy" . . . made him "mad all his life, at least not sober."

[3] ABSOLVING FELONS—The allusion is to the practice of acquitting criminals whose acts may be proved to be due to insanity.

[4] HIS GRIMACES—A number of other astonishing mannerisms are recorded by Boswell.

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[5] TORPID—Dull, without sensibility.

IV

With such infirmities of body and of mind, this celebrated man was left, at two and twenty, to fight his way through the world. He remained during about five years in the midland counties. At Lichfield, his birthplace and his early home, he had inherited some friends, and acquired others. He was kindly noticed by Henry Hervey,[1] a gay officer of noble family, who happened to be quartered there. Gilbert Walmesley,[2] a registrar of the ecclesiastical court of the diocese—a man of distinguished parts, learning, and knowledge of the world—did himself honor by patronizing the young adventurer, whose repulsive person, unpolished manners, and squalid garb, moved many of the petty aristocracy[3] of the neighborhood to laughter or to disgust. At Lichfield, however, Johnson could find no way of earning a livelihood. He became usher[4] of a grammar school in Leicestershire; he resided as a humble companion[5] in the house of a country gentleman; but a life of dependence was insupportable to his haughty spirit. He repaired to Birmingham, and there earned a few guineas by literary drudgery.[6] In that town he printed a translation, little noticed at the time, and long forgotten, of a Latin book about Abyssinia.[7] He then put forth proposals for publishing by subscription the poems of Politian,[8] with notes containing a history of modern Latin verse; but subscriptions did not come in, and the volume never appeared.

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[1] HERVEY—Hon. Henry Hervey, fourth son of the Earl of Bristol. Johnson was frequently entertained at Hervey's house in London.

While leading this vagrant and miserable life, Johnson fell in love. The object of his passion was Mrs. Elizabeth Porter,[9] a widow who had children as old as himself. To ordinary spectators, the lady appeared to be a short, fat, coarse woman, painted half an inch thick, dressed in gaudy colors, and fond of exhibiting provincial airs and graces which were not exactly those of the Queensberrys and Lepels.[10] To Johnson, however, whose passions were strong, whose eyesight was too weak to distinguish ceruse[11] from natural bloom, and who had seldom or never been in the same room with a woman of real fashion, his Tetty,[12] as he called her, was the most beautiful, graceful, and accomplished of her sex. That his admiration was unfeigned cannot be doubted, for she was as poor as himself. She accepted, with a readiness which did her little honor, the addresses of a suitor who might have been her son. The marriage, however, in spite of occasional wranglings, proved happier than might have been expected. The lover continued to be under the illusions of the wedding day till the lady died, in her sixty-fourth year. On her monument he placed an inscription extolling the charms of her person and of her manners; and when, long after her decease, he had occasion to mention her, he exclaimed, with a tenderness half ludicrous,[13] half pathetic, "pretty creature!"

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[2] GILBERT WALMESLEY—Registrar of the Ecclesiastical Court of Lichfield of whom Johnson said, "I was only a boy, yet he never received my notions with contempt."

[3] PETTY ARISTOCRACY—That is, the small-town aristocracy such as the "Dumfries aristocracy" mentioned in Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*.

[4] USHER—This word is defined by Johnson himself as an underteacher. This school was at Market-Bosworth. Johnson found the employment very irksome.

[5] COMPANION—"He was invited by Mr. Hector, a surgeon, to pass some time with him . . . as his guest," where he resided for about six months.

[6] LITERARY DRUDGERY—A term used to designate a variety of minor literary activities such as making translations, abridgements, supplying editorial notes, etc., usually performed to order, so to speak, for a publisher and generally for small compensation. The term "hack work" is also used in this essay to describe this kind of work. Johnson's hack work was done for the Birmingham *Journal*.

[7] ABYSSINIA—The book was *A Voyage to Abyssinia* by Lobo, a Portuguese Jesuit. Johnson received five guineas for his translation.

[8] POLITIAN—An Italian lyric poet of the Renaissance, born at Monte Pulciano from which he took his name.

[9] MRS. ELIZABETH PORTER—Macaulay's description is greatly exaggerated. This is a good illustration of Macaulay's great weakness—his sacrifice of fact to effect.

His marriage made it necessary for him to exert himself more strenuously than he had hitherto done. He took a house in the neighborhood of his native town, and advertised[14] for pupils. But eighteen months passed away; and only three pupils came to his academy. Indeed, his appearance was so strange, and his temper so violent, that his schoolroom must have resembled an ogre's den. Nor was the tawdry painted grandmother whom he called his Tetty, well qualified to make provision for the comfort of young gentlemen. David Garrick,[15] who was one of the pupils, used many years later to throw the best company of London into convulsions of laughter by mimicking the endearments of this extraordinary pair.

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[10] QUEENSBERRYS AND LEPELS—Two aristocratic English families. Instead of saying that the airs and graces of Mrs. Porter were crude, Macaulay makes his statement more concrete by saying they were not those of the Queensberrys and Lepels.

[11] CERUSE—A cosmetic.

[12] TETTY—Or Tetsy, which, like Betty or Betsy, is provincially used as a contraction for Elizabeth, his wife's Christian name.

[13] HALF LUDICROUS—This statement is wholly unwarranted. Boswell says of Sir John Hawkins who evidently influenced Macaulay's judgment, "Why Sir John Hawkins should unwarrantly take up on him even to *suppose* that Johnson's fondness for her was *dissembled* . . . I cannot conceive; unless it proceeded from a want of similar feeling in his own breast."

[14] ADVERTISED—In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1736, there is the following advertisement: "At Edial, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages, by SAMUEL JOHNSON.

At length Johnson, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, determined to seek his fortune in the capital as a literary adventurer. He set out with a few guineas, three acts of the tragedy of *Irene*[16] in manuscript, and two or three letters of introduction from his friend Walmesley.[17]

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[15] DAVID GARRICK—One of the greatest actors of his time and manager of the Drury Lane Theater.

[16] *Irene*—The plot of *Irene* is as follows: Irene was a beautiful Greek maiden who fell into the hands of Mahomet, when the latter captured Constantinople in 1453. Enamoured of Irene, Mahomet neglected the affairs of state thereby so enraging his followers that they conspired to dethrone him. When the conspiracy was made known to him he resolved to sacrifice Irene. In a scene of great splendor he struck off her head, exclaiming, "Now by this judge whether your emperor is able to bridle his affections or not."

[17] WALMESLEY—Gilbert Walmesley, before mentioned. Walmesley said in a letter to Rev. John Colson, "Johnson is a very good scholar and poet, and I have great hopes will turn out a fine tragedy writer. If it should any way lie in your way, I doubt not but you would be ready to recommend and assist your countryman."

V

Never since literature became a calling in England had it been a less gainful calling than at the time when Johnson took up his residence in London. In the preceding generation, a writer of eminent merit was sure to be munificently rewarded by the Government. The least that he could expect was a pension or a sinecure[1] place; and, if he showed any aptitude for politics, he might hope to be a member of Parliament, a lord of the treasury, an ambassador, a secretary of state. It would be easy, on the other hand, to name several writers[2] of the nineteenth century, of whom the least successful has received forty thousand pounds from the booksellers. But Johnson entered on his vocation in the most dreary part of the dreary interval which separated two ages of prosperity. Literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public. One man of letters, indeed, Pope, had acquired by his pen what was then considered as a handsome fortune, and lived on a footing of equality with nobles and ministers of state. But this was a solitary exception. Even an author whose reputation was established and whose works were popular—such an author as Thomson,[3] whose *Seasons* were in every library; such an author as Fielding,[4] whose *Pasquin* had had a greater run than any drama since the *Beggar's Opera*[5]—was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawning his best coat, the means of dining on tripe at a cookshop underground, where he could wipe his hands, after his greasy meal, on the back of a Newfoundland dog. It is easy, therefore, to imagine what humiliations and privations must have awaited the novice who had still to earn a name. One of the publishers to whom Johnson applied for employment measured with a scornful eye that athletic though uncouth frame, and exclaimed, "You had better get a porter's knot,[6] and carry trunks." Nor was the advice bad; for a porter was likely to be as plentifully fed and as comfortably lodged as a poet.

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[1] SINECURE—An office requiring very little from its incumbent. Macaulay alludes in this paragraph to the practice on the part of great nobles of securing for literary men whom they wished to patronize some government appointment.

Some time appears to have elapsed before Johnson was able to form any literary connection from which he could expect more than bread for the day which was passing over him. He never forgot the generosity with which Hervey, who was now residing in London, relieved his wants during this time of trial. "Harry Hervey," said the old philosopher many years later, "was a vicious man; but he was very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him." At Hervey's table, Johnson sometimes enjoyed feasts which were made more agreeable by contrast. But in general he dined, and thought that he dined well, on sixpennyworth of meat and a pennyworth of bread at an alehouse near Drury Lane.[7]

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[2] SEVERAL WRITERS—Sir Walter Scott was perhaps the most successful. His novels paid him very well.

[3] THOMSON—James Thomson (1700–1748), author of the *Seasons,* a poem describing the nature and occupations of the four seasons.

[4] FIELDING—Henry Fielding (1707–1754), the foremost novelist of the day, best known probably for his great novel *Tom Jones*. His *Pasquin* was a dramatic satire.

[5] *Beggar's Opera*—A burlesque opera by John Gay which enjoyed great popularity in London.

[6] PORTER'S KNOT—A pad placed on the head to support burdens carried by a porter.

[7] DRURY LANE—A street in London, the site of Drury Lane Theater.

VI

The effect of the privations and sufferings which he endured at this time was discernible to the last in his temper and his deportment. His manners had never been courtly. They now became almost savage. Being frequently under the necessity of wearing shabby coats and dirty shirts, he became a confirmed sloven. Being often very hungry when he sat down to his meals, he contracted a habit of eating with ravenous greediness. Even to the end of his life, and even at the tables of the great, the sight of food affected him as it affects wild beasts and birds of prey. His taste in cookery, formed in subterranean ordinaries[1] and *a la mode* beefshops,[2] was far from delicate. Whenever he was so fortunate as to have near him a hare that had been kept too long, or a meat pie made with rancid butter, he gorged himself with such violence, that his veins swelled and the moisture broke out on his forehead. The affronts which his poverty emboldened stupid and low-minded men to offer to him, would have broken a mean spirit into sycophancy,[3] but made him rude even to ferocity. Unhappily, the insolence, which, while it was defensive, was pardonable and in some sense respectable, accompanied him into societies where he was treated with courtesy and kindness. He was repeatedly provoked into striking those who had taken liberties with him. All the sufferers, however, were wise enough to abstain from talking about their beatings, except Osborne,[4] the most rapacious and brutal of booksellers, who proclaimed everywhere that he had been knocked down by the huge fellow whom he had hired to puff the Harleian Library.

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[1] SUBTERRANEAN ORDINARIES—Cheap eating-houses, called subterranean because they were in basements.

[2] *A la mode* BEEFSHOPS—Beef *a la mode* is a term for beef stew.

[3] SYCHOPHANCY—Servility. A sychophant is one who by fawning and flattery endeavors to work himself into the good graces of another.

About a year after Johnson had begun to reside in London, he was fortunate enough to obtain regular employment from Cave,[5] an enterprising and intelligent bookseller, who was proprietor and editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine.* That journal, just entering on the ninth year of its long existence, was the only periodical work in the kingdom which then had what would now be called a large circulation. It was, indeed, the chief source of parliamentary intelligence.[6] It was not then safe, even during a recess, to publish an account of the proceedings of either House without some disguise. Cave, however, ventured to entertain his readers with what he called "Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput."[7] France was Blefuscu; London was Mildendo; pounds were sprugs; the Duke of Newcastle[8] was the Nardac secretary of state; Lord Hardwicke was the Hurgo Hickrad; and William Pulteney was Wingul Pulnub. To write the speeches was, during several years, the business of Johnson. He was generally furnished with notes—meagre indeed, and inaccurate—of what had been said; but sometimes he had to find arguments and eloquence, both for the ministry and for the opposition. He was himself a Tory,[9] not from rational conviction—for his serious opinion was, that one form of government was just as good or as bad as another—but from mere passion, such as inflamed the Capulets against the Montagues,[10] or the Blues of the Roman circus against the Greens.[11] In his infancy he had heard so much talk [12] about the villainies of the Whigs and the dangers of the Church, that he had become a furious partisan when he could scarcely speak. Before he was three, he had insisted on being taken to hear Sacheverell [13] preach at Litchfield Cathedral, and had listened to the sermon with as much respect, and probably with as much intelligence,[14] as any Staffordshire squire in the congregation. The work which had been begun in the nursery had been completed by the university. Oxford, when Johnson resided there, was the most Jacobitical place in England; and Pembroke was one of the most Jacobitical colleges in Oxford. The prejudices which he brought up to London were scarcely less absurd than those of his own Tom Tempest.[15] Charles II[16] and James II were two of the best kings that ever reigned. Laud,[17] a poor creature who never did, said, or wrote anything indicating more than the ordinary capacity of an old woman, was a prodigy of parts and learning, over whose tomb Art and Genius still continued to weep. Hampden[18] deserved no more honorable name than that of "the zealot of rebellion." Even the ship money, condemned not less decidedly by Falkland[19] and Clarendon than by the bitterest Roundheads, Johnson would not pronounce to have been an unconstitutional impost. Under a goverment the mildest that had ever been known in the world, under a government which allowed to the people an unprecedented liberty of speech and action, he fancied that he was a slave; he assailed the ministry[20] with obloquy[21] which refuted itself,[22] and regretted the lost freedom and happiness of those golden days[23] in which a writer who had taken but one-tenth part of the license allowed to him would have been pilloried, mangled with the shears, whipped at the cart's tail, and flung into a noisome[24] dungeon to die. He hated dissenters[25] and stockjobbers, the excise and the army, septennial parliaments and continental connections. He long had an aversion to the Scotch,[26] an aversion of which he could not remember the commencement, but which, he owned, had probably originated in his abhorrence of the conduct of the nation during the Great Rebellion.[27] It is easy to guess in what manner debates on great party questions were likely to be reported by a man whose judgment was so much disordered by party spirit. A show of fairness was, indeed, necessary to the prosperity of the magazine. But Johnson long afterwards owned, that, though he had saved appearances, he had taken care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it; and, in fact, every passage which has lived, every passage which bears the marks of his higher faculties, is put into the mouth of some member of the opposition.

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[4] OSBORNE—Thomas Osborne, a bookseller who on the death of Robert Hârley, Earl of Oxford, purchased a collection of manuscripts which Oxford had made. The collection is now known as the Harleian Library and is in the British Museum. Osborne employed Johnson to write an account of this collection to be prefixed to a catalog of the manuscripts. Boswell says that Johnson one day knocked Osborne down in his shop, with a folio, and put his foot upon his neck. Johnson said to Boswell, "Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him. But it was not in his shop: it was in my own chamber."

[5] CAVE—Edward Cave, a printer and publisher, best known perhaps for the *Gentleman's Magazine* of which he was owner and publisher. Johnson's connection with the magazine began in 1738.

[6] PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE—That is, of what went on in the Houses of Parliament. At that time it was forbidden to report these proceedings.

[7] LILLIPUT—Lilliput and the other names employed by Cave for places and persons were taken from Swift's *Gulliver's Travels.*

[8] DUKE OF NEWCASTLE—Newcastle was Secretary of State in the Pelham Ministry which came in in 1745. Lord Hardwicke was Lord Chancellor under Walpole. Poulteney was leader of the Whigs who opposed Walpole after 1730. At the time to which Macaulay refers England was at war with France.

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[9] On the origin of the words Whig and Tory, see the *Historical Background* of Burke's *Speech* in this volume. Johnson once declared that "Whiggism is a negation of all principle."

[10] CAPULETS AGAINST THE MONTAGUES—The rival families of Verona in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet.*

[11] BLUES . . . AGAINST THE GREENS—In the chariot races held in ancient Rome one party of charioteers wore blue livery, the other green. Macaulay probably alludes here to the fact that the partisans of the Blues and Greens carried their animosities into politics.

[12] MUCH TALK—It will be remembered that Johnson's father was a staunch churchman and a Jacobite.

[13] SACHEVERELL—Dr. Henry Sacheverell, famous High Church divine who was impeached before the House of Lords by the Whigs for a sermon against the French War in 1712. His impeachment made him somewhat of a martyr in the eyes of the Tories and churchmen.

[14] PROBABLY WITH AS MUCH INTELLIGENCE—Macaulay who was clearly in sympathy with the Whigs is here taking a satirical fling at the Tory gentry.

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[15] Tom Tempest—A character of Johnson's creation in one of the *Idler* papers, a staunch Jacobite.

[16] Charles II and James II—Johnson is reported as having said, "Charles II . . . was the best king we have had from his time till the reign of his present Majesty, except James II, who was a very good king."

[17] Laud—Archbishop of Canterbury under Charles I and the enemy of Puritanism.

[18] Hampden—John Hampden, whose refusal to pay the ship money tax levied by Charles I led to the outbreak of the Puritan Revolution. The ship money tax was an old tax revived by Charles I in 1634 in an attempt to raise money without the consent of Parliament. Hampden is mentioned in Browning's *Cavalier Tunes,* see *Prose and Poetry, Eleventh Year.*

[19] Falkland and Clarendon—Both these noblemen were Royalists but they had, as Macaulay says, condemned the ship money tax.

[20] Ministry—That is, the Whig ministry. See the *Historical Background* of Burke's *Speech* where an account of the government of England in this period is given.

[21] Obloquy—Abuse.

[22] Refuted itself—That is, had Johnson been living under the despotic government which he believed he was, he would not have been permitted to write as he did.

[23] Golden days—Macaulay here alludes to the punishments visited upon a writer who in the sixteenth century criticised the government.

[24] Noisome—Foul-smelling.

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[25] DISSENTERS, etc.—Dissenters were those who dissented from, or refused to conform to the Church of England. Stockjobbers is a contemptuous term for those who were interested in the formation of stock companies especially for foreign trade—England was in the midst of a period of great commercial prosperity under the Whig government. Excise is an allusion to Walpole's excise bills, or taxation laws, Walpole being the Whig Prime Minister during these years. The army is an allusion to the Whig policy of making it impossible for the king to maintain a standing army. Septennial parliaments is an allusion to the Act of 1716 limiting the life of Parliament to seven years. The purpose of this Act was to prevent a sovereign from gaining control over Parliament and perpetuating the Parliament. The measure had the support of the Whigs. Continental connections is an allusion to the foreign policy supported by the Whigs, that of making alliances on the continent against the power of France.

[26] SCOTCH—Johnson is quoted as having said, "Sir . . . the noblest prospect that a Scotchman ever sees is the high road that leads him to England."

[27] THE GREAT REBELLION—The Puritan Revolution. The Scotch assisted the Puritans in their resistance to Charles I; and in May, 1646, after Charles had come into the Scotch camp and had failed to come to an agreement with the Scotch, the latter turned him over to the Parliament.

VII

A few weeks after Johnson had entered on these obscure labors, he published a work which at once placed him high among the writers of his age. It is probable that what he had suffered during his first year in London had often reminded him of some parts of that noble poem in which Juvenal[1] had described the the pigeons' nests in the tottering garrets which overhung the streets of Rome. Pope's admirable imitations of Horace's[2] *Satires and Epistles* had recently appeared, were in every hand, and were by many readers thought superior to the originals. What Pope had done for Horace, Johnson aspired to do for Juvenal. The enterprise was bold, and yet judicious. For between Johnson and Juvenal there was much in common—much more, certainly, than between Pope and Horace.

Johnson's *London*[3] appeared without his name in May, 1738. He received only ten guineas for this stately and vigorous poem; but the sale was rapid, and the success complete. A second edition was required within a week. Those small critics who are always desirous to lower established reputations, ran about proclaiming that the anonymous satirist was superior to Pope in Pope's own peculiar department of literature. It ought to be remembered, to the honor of Pope, that he joined heartily in the applause with which the appearance of a rival genius was welcomed. He made inquiries about the author of *London*. Such a man, he said, could not long be concealed. The name was soon discovered; and Pope, with great kindness, exerted himself to obtain an academical degree,[4] and the mastership of a grammar school, for the poor young poet. The attempt failed, and Johnson remained a bookseller's hack.

It does not appear that these two men—the most eminent writer of the generation which was going out, and the most eminent writer of the generation which was coming in—ever saw each other. They lived in very different circles, one surrounded by dukes and earls, the other by starving pamphleteers and index makers.[5] Among Johnson's associates at this time may be mentioned Boyse,[6] who, when his shirts were pledged, scrawled Latin verses, sitting up in bed with his arms through two holes in his blankets, who composed very respectable sacred poetry when he was sober, and who was at last run over by a hackney coach when he was drunk; Hoole,[7] surnamed the metaphysical tailor, who, instead of attending to his measures, used to trace geometrical diagrams on the board where he sat cross-legged; and the penitent impostor, George Psalmanazar,[8] who, after poring all day, in a humble lodging, on the folios of Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers, indulged himself at night with literary and theological conversation at an alehouse in the city. But the most remarkable of the persons with whom at this time Johnson consorted, was Richard Savage,[9] an earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue ribbands[10] in St. James's Square, and had lain with fifty-pound weights of irons on his legs in the condemned ward of Newgate.[11] This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had failed him. His patrons had been taken away by death, or estranged by the riotous profusion with which he squandered their bounty, and the ungrateful insolence with which he rejected their advice. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the piazza of Covent Garden[12] in warm weather, and in cold weather as near as he could get to the furnace of a glasshouse.[13] Yet, in his misery, he was still an agreeable companion. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes about that gay and brilliant world from which he was now an outcast. He had observed the great men of both parties in hours of careless relaxation, had seen the leaders of opposition without the mask of patriotism, and had heard the prime minister roar with laughter, and tell stories not overdecent. During some months, Savage lived in the closest familiarity with Johnson; and then the friends parted, not without tears. Johnson remained in London to drudge for Cave. Savage went to the west of England, lived there as he had lived everywhere, and in 1743 died, penniless and heartbroken, in Bristol jail.

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[1] JUVENAL—A Roman satirical poet.

[2] HORACE—A leading poet of the Augustan age in Rome. See Note 12, Part I above.

[3] *London*—*London* is a satire especially on the life and manners of the wealthy of the time.

[4] ACADEMICAL DEGREE—Pope recommended Johnson to Earl Gower who endeavored to procure for him a degree from Dublin.

[5] PAMPHLETEERS AND INDEX MAKERS—Two kinds of literary hacks.

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[6] BOYSE—Samuel Boyse, an obscure Irish poet.

[7] HOOLE—John Hoole. Johnson wrote a dedication for Hoole's translation of *Tasso* and otherwise interested himself in Hoole's literary efforts. Johnson often went to "eat a beefsteak in Grub Street with Hoole."

[8] GEORGE PSALMANAZAR—Johnson says of Psalmanazar, "I used to go and sit with him at an alehouse in the city."

[9] RICHARD SAVAGE—According to Savage's story he was the son of the Countess of Macclesfield and Earl Rivers, but positive proof has never been forthcoming. Johnson seems to have seen a great deal of Savage and to have enjoyed his company.

[10] BLUE RIBBANDS IN ST. JAMES'S SQUARE—That is, among the nobility. In Johnson's time St. James Square was the most fashionable part of London and the situation of the royal residence; hence the expression "The Court of St. James." The blue ribbon was the insignia of the Order of the Garter.

[11] NEWGATE—A famous London prison.

Soon after his death, while the public curiosity was strongly excited about his extraordinary character and his not less extraordinary adventures, a life of him appeared, widely different from the catchpenny[14] lives of eminent men which were then a staple article of manufacture in Grub Street.[15] The style was, indeed, deficient in ease and variety; and the writer was evidently too partial to the Latin element of our language. But the little work, with all its faults, was a masterpiece. No finer specimen of literary biography existed in any language, living or dead; and a discerning critic might have confidently predicted that the author was destined to be the founder of a new school of English eloquence.

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[12] COVENT GARDEN—A square or public place which took its name from the fact that it was at one time the convent garden of the monks of Westminster. The "piazza" refers to an arcade or covered walk which ran around the outside.

[13] GLASSHOUSE—That is, a glass factory.

[14] CATCHPENNY—Cheap and showy.

[15] GRUB STREET—According to Johnson's Dictionary, "A street in London much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called Grub Street." A good description of Grub Street is given by Goldsmith in *The Citizen of the World*.

VIII

The *Life of Savage* was anonymous; but it was well known in literary circles that Johnson was the writer. During the three years which followed, he produced no important work; but he was not, and indeed could not be, idle. The fame of his abilities and learning continued to grow. Warburton[1] pronounced him a man of parts and genius; and the praise of Warburton was then no light thing. Such was Johnson's reputation, that in 1747 several eminent booksellers combined to employ him in the arduous work of preparing a *Dictionary of the English Language,* in two folio[2] volumes. The sum which they agreed to pay him was only fifteen hundred guineas; and out of this sum he had to pay several poor men of letters who assisted him in the humbler parts of his task.

The prospectus[3] of the *Dictionary* he addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield.[4] Chesterfield had long been celebrated for the politeness of his manners, the brilliancy of his wit, and the delicacy of his taste. He was acknowledged to be the finest speaker in the House of Lords. He had recently governed Ireland, at a momentous conjuncture, with eminent firmness, wisdom, and humanity; and he had since become Secretary of State. He received Johnson's homage with the most winning affability, and requited it with a few guineas, bestowed, doubtless, in a very graceful manner, but was by no means desirous to see all his carpets blackened with the London mud, and his soups and wines thrown to right and left over the gowns of fine ladies and the waistcoats of fine gentlemen, by an absent, awkward scholar, who gave strange starts, and uttered strange growls, who dressed

[1] WARBURTON—William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester. In his day Warburton enjoyed a great reputation as a literary critic. Johnson said of him, "He praised me at a time when praise was of value to me." Warburton is perhaps best remembered today as an editor of Shakespeare.

[2] FOLIO—A printer's designation for a book the pages of which are made by folding a sheet of paper about 13″ x 17″ to make four pages.

[3] PROSPECTUS—A paper or pamphlet giving a description or summary of a proposed work.

[4] EARL OF CHESTERFIELD—Chesterfield was in the Cabinet under Walpole. In the field of literature he is best remembered for his *Letters to His Son.*

like a scarecrow, and ate like a cormorant.[5] During some time, Johnson continued to call on his patron, but, after being repeatedly told by the porter that his lordship was not at home, took the hint, and ceased to present himself at the inhospitable door.

Johnson had flattered himself that he should have completed his *Dictionary* by the end of 1750; but it was not till 1755 that he at length gave his huge volumes to the world. During the seven years which he passed in the drudgery of penning definitions, and marking quotations[6] for transcription, he sought for relaxation in literary labor of a more agreeable kind. In 1749 he published the *Vanity of Human Wishes,* an excellent imitation of the *Tenth Satire* of Juvenal. It is in truth not easy to say whether the palm belongs to the ancient or to the modern poet. The couplets in which the fall of Wolsey[7] is described, though lofty and sonorous, are feeble when compared with the wonderful lines which bring before us all Rome in tumult on the day of the fall of Sejanus,[8] the laurels on the doorposts, the white bull stalking towards the Capitol, the statues rolling down from their pedestals, the flatterers of the disgraced minister running to see him dragged with a hook through the streets, and to have a kick at his carcass before it is hurled into the Tiber. It must be owned, too, that in the concluding passage the Christian moralist[9] has not made the most of his advantages, and has fallen decidedly short of the sublimity of his Pagan model. On the other hand, Juvenal's Hannibal[10] must yield to Johnson's Charles,[11] and Johnson's vigorous and pathetic enumeration of the miseries of a literary life must be allowed to be superior to Juvenal's lamentation over the fate of Demosthenes and Cicero.[12]

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[5] CORMORANT—The cormorant is a large web-footed, voracious sea-bird. Hence "like a cormorant" means greedy, or gluttonous.

[6] QUOTATIONS—Consult an unabridged dictionary for an example of a quotation to illustrate the correct use of a word. Many of the quotations in our unabridged dictionaries have come down to us from Dr. Johnson.

[7] WOLSEY—Cardinal Wolsey, chief minister of Henry VIII, lost the King's favor by opposing the King's marriage to Anne Boleyn. His dramatic fall from office appealed to the imagination of Shakespeare who in *Henry VIII* put into the mouth of Wolsey a famous speech in which the Cardinal bade farewell to all his greatness.

[8] SEJANUS—Sejanus, commander of the praetorian guard and a favorite of the Roman emperor, Tiberius, being left in charge of the government during the absence of Tiberius, endeavored to make himself emperor. The allusion to "laurels," etc. are to lines 92–97 in the *Tenth Satire* of Juvenal.

[9] CHRISTIAN MORALIST—That is, Johnson. Pagan model—That is, Juvenal.

For the copyright of the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, Johnson received only fifteen guineas.

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[10] HANNIBAL—Commander of the Carthaginian armies in the Punic War.

[11] CHARLES—Charles XII of Sweden whose picture in the *Vanity of Human Wishes* Boswell thought "as highly finished . . . as can possibly be conceived."

[12] DEMOSTHENES AND CICERO—The greatest orators of ancient Greece and Rome, respectively.

IX

A few days after the publication of this poem, his tragedy, begun many years before, was brought on the stage. His pupil, David Garrick, had in 1741 made his appearance on a humble stage in Goodman's Fields,[1] had at once risen to the first place among actors, and was now, after several years of almost uninterrupted success, manager of Drury Lane Theatre. The relation between him and his old preceptor was of a very singular kind. They repelled each other strongly, and yet attracted each other strongly. Nature had made them of very different clay; and circumstances had fully brought out the natural peculiarities of both. Sudden prosperity had turned Garrick's head. Continued adversity had soured Johnson's temper. Johnson saw, with more envy than became so great a man, the villa, the plate, the china, the Brussels carpet, which the little mimic[2] had got by repeating, with grimaces and gesticulations, what wiser men had written; and the exquisitely sensitive vanity of Garrick was galled by the thought, that, while all the rest of the world was applauding him, he could obtain from one morose cynic,[3] whose opinion it was impossible to despise, scarcely any compliment not acidulated[4] with scorn. Yet the two Lichfield men had so many early recollections in common, and sympathized with each other on so many points on which they sympathized with nobody else in the vast population of the capital, that though the master was often provoked by the monkeylike impertinence of the pupil, and the pupil by the bearish rudeness of the master, they remained friends till they were parted by death. Garrick now brought *Irene* out, with alterations sufficient to displease the author, yet not sufficient to make the piece pleasing to the audience. The public, however, listened, with little emotion, but with much civility, to five acts of monotonous declamation. After nine representations, the play was withdrawn. It is, indeed, altogether unsuited to the stage, and, even when perused in the closet, will be found hardly worthy of the author. He had not the slightest notion of what blank verse should be. A change in the last syllable of every other line would make the versification of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* closely resemble the versification of *Irene*. The poet, however, cleared, by his benefit nights[5] and by the sale of the copyright of his tragedy, about three hundred pounds, then a great sum in his estimation.

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[1] GOODMAN'S FIELDS—A London playhouse which Garrick made famous.

[2] MIMIC—Macaulay evidently refers to the following passage in Boswell, "Garrick, however, when he pleased, could imitate Johnson very exactly; for that great actor . . . possessed also an admirable talent of mimicry. He was always jealous that Johnson spoke lightly of him. I recollect his exhibiting to me one day, as if saying, 'Davy has some convivial pleasantry about him, but 't is a futile fellow'; which he uttered perfectly with the tone and air of Johnson."

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[3] MOROSO CYNIC—Macaulay is here using the word more in its original meaning to designate one of that school of ancient Greek philosophers who scorned pleasure.

[4] ACIDULATED—Embittered.

[5] BENEFIT NIGHTS—The receipts for the third, sixth, and ninth performances went to Johnson, hence these were "benefit" nights.

X

About a year after the representation of *Irene*, he began to publish a series of short essays on morals, manners, and literature. This species of composition had been brought into fashion by the success of the *Tatler* and by the still more brilliant success of the *Spectator*.[1] A crowd of small writers had vainly attempted to revive Addison. *The Lay Monastery*, the *Censor*, the *Freethinker*, the *Plain Dealer*, the *Champion*, and other works of the same kind, had had their short day. None of them had obtained a permanent place in our literature; and they are now to be found only in the libraries of the curious. At length Johnson undertook the adventure in which so many aspirants had failed. In the thirty-sixth year after the appearance of the last number of the *Spectator*, appeared the first number of the *Rambler*. From March, 1750, to March, 1752, this paper continued to come out every Tuesday and Saturday.

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[1] *Tatler . . . Spectator*—The names of two series of periodical essays on manners and custom written by Richard Steele and Thomas Addison.

From the first, the *Rambler* was enthusiastically admired by a few eminent men. Richardson[2] when only five numbers had appeared, pronounced it equal, if not superior, to the *Spectator*. Young and Hartley[3] expressed their approbation not less warmly. Bubb Dodington,[4] among whose many faults indifference to the claims of genius and learning cannot be reckoned, solicited the acquaintance of the writer. In consequence, probably, of the good offices of Dodington, who was then the confidential adviser of Prince Frederick,[5] two of his Royal Highness's gentlemen carried a gracious message to the printing office, and ordered seven copies for Leicester House.[6] But these overtures seem to have been very coldly received. Johnson had had enough of the patronage of the great to last him all his life, and was not disposed to haunt any other door as he had haunted the door of Chesterfield.

By the public the *Rambler* was at first very coldly received. Though the price of a number was only twopence, the sale did not amount to five hundred. The profits were therefore very small. But as soon as the flying leaves were collected and reprinted, they became popular. The author lived to see thirteen thousand copies spread over England alone. Separate editions were published for the Scotch and Irish markets. A large party pronounced the style perfect, so absolutely perfect, that in some essays it would be impossible for the writer himself to alter a single word for the better. Another party, not less numerous, vehemently accused him of having corrupted the purity of the English tongue. The best critics admitted that his diction was too monotonous, too obviously artificial, and now and then turgid,[7] even to absurdity. But they did justice to the acuteness of his observations on morals and manners, to the constant precision and frequent brilliancy of his language, to the weighty and magnificent eloquence of many serious passages, and to the solemn yet pleasing humor of some of the lighter papers. On the question of precedence between Addison and Johnson—a question which, seventy years ago, was much disputed—posterity has pronounced a decision from which there is no appeal.[8] Sir Roger,[9] his chaplain and his butler, Will Wimble and Will Honeycomb, the Vision of Mirza,[10] the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Everlasting Club, the Dunmow Flitch, the Loves of Hilpah and Shalum, the Visit to the Exchange, and the Visit to the Abbey, are known to everybody. But many men and women, even of highly cultivated minds, are unacquainted with Squire Bluster[11] and Mrs. Busy, Quisquilius and Venustulus, the Allegory of Wit and Learning, the Chronicle of the Revolutions of a Garret, and the sad fate of Aningait and Ajut.

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[2] Richardson—Samuel Richardson, an eighteenth century novelist, author of *Clarissa Harlowe* and *Pamela*.

[3] Young and Hartley—Thomas Young, clergyman and poet, chiefly remembered for his poem *Night Thoughts*. David Hartley, a philosopher and a physician, author of *Observations on Man*.

[4] Bubb Dodington—George Bubb Dodington, conspicuous in his day as a patron of letters.

[5] Prince Frederick—Eldest son of George II, and father of George III.

[6] Leicester House—The residence of Prince Frederick.

The last *Rambler* was written in a sad and gloomy hour. Mrs. Johnson had been given over by the physicians. Three days later she died. She left her husband almost heartbroken. Many people had been surprised to see a man of his genius and learning stooping to every drudgery, and denying himself almost every comfort, for the purpose of supplying a silly, affected old woman with superfluities, which she accepted with but little gratitude. But all his affection had been concentrated on her. He had neither brother nor sister, neither son nor daughter. To him she was beautiful as the Gunnings,[12] and witty as Lady Mary.[13] Her opinion of his writings was more important to him than the voice of the pit[14] of Drury Lane Theatre, or the judgment of the *Monthly Review*.[15] The chief support which had sustained him through the most arduous labor of his life was the hope that she would enjoy the fame and the profit which he anticipated from his *Dictionary*. She was gone; and in that vast labyrinth of streets, peopled by eight hundred thousand human beings, he was alone. Yet it was necessary for him to set himself, as he expressed it, doggedly to work. After three more laborious years, the *Dictionary* was at length complete.

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[7] TURGID—Pompous, inflated.

[8] NO APPEAL—The decision, of course, is in favor of Addison.

[9] SIR ROGER . . . WILL WIMBLE AND WILL HONEYCOMB—Characters whom Addison and Steele created in the *Spectator* papers.

[10] THE VISION OF MIRZA, ETC.—Titles of individual papers in the series.

[11] SQUARE BLUSTER, etc.—These come from Johnson's *Rambler*.

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[12] THE GUNNINGS—Two famous beauties of Johnson's day.

[13] LADY MARY—Lady Mary Montagu, a brilliant and highly intelligent woman of the day whose letters are still read.

[14] VOICE OF THE PIT—In English theaters the seats directly behind the orchestra are known as the pit. The expression means, of course, public opinion.

[15] *Monthly Review*—A literary journal or review of the period.

XI

It had been generally supposed that this great work would be dedicated to the eloquent and accomplished nobleman[1] to whom the prospectus had been addressed. He well knew the value of such a compliment; and therefore, when the day of publication drew near, he exerted himself to soothe, by a show of zealous and at the same time of delicate and judicious kindness, the pride which he had so cruelly wounded. Since the *Ramblers* had ceased to appear, the town had been entertained by a journal called *The World*, to which many men of high rank and fashion contributed. In two successive numbers of *The World*, the *Dictionary* was, to use the modern phrase, puffed with wonderful skill. The writings of Johnson were warmly praised. It was proposed that he should be invested with the authority of a dictator, nay, of a pope, over our language, and that his decisions about the meaning and the spelling of words should be received as final. His two folios, it was said, would of course be bought by everybody who could afford to buy them. It was soon known that these papers were written by Chesterfield. But the just resentment of Johnson was not to be so appeased. In a letter [2] written with singular energy and dignity of thought and language, he repelled the tardy advances of his patron. The *Dictionary* came forth without a dedication. In the preface the author truly declared that he owed nothing to the great, and described the difficulties with which he had been left to struggle so forcibly and pathetically, that the ablest and most malevolent of all the enemies of his fame, Horne Tooke,[3] never could read that passage without tears.

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[1] NOBLEMAN—That is, the Earl of Chesterfield.

The public, on this occasion, did Johnson full justice, and something more than justice. The best lexicographer [4] may well be content if his productions are received by the world with cold esteem. But Johnson's *Dictionary* was hailed with an enthusiasm such as no similar work has ever excited. It was, indeed, the first dictionary which could be read with pleasure. The definitions show so much acuteness of thought and command of language, and the passages quoted from poets, divines, and philosophers, are so skilfully selected, that a leisure hour may always be very agreeably spent in turning over the pages. The faults of the book resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist.[5] He knew little or nothing of any Teutonic language [6] except English, which, indeed, as he wrote it, was scarcely a Teutonic language; and thus he was absolutely at the mercy of Junius and Skinner.[7]

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[2] Letter—Johnson's letter will be found at the end of this section.

[3] Horne Tooke—Rev. Horne Tooke, an etymologist of whom Johnson said, "Were I to make a new edition of my *Dictionary,* I would adopt several of Mr. Horne's etymologies."

[4] Lexicographer—Johnson's own definition of a lexicographer is "A writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge."

[5] Etymologist—A student who specializes in the derivations of words.

[6] Teutonic language—That is, any language based upon the ancient Germanic tongue. See *The Story of English Literature* in this volume.

The *Dictionary,* though it raised Johnson's fame, added nothing to his pecuniary means. The fifteen hundred guineas which the booksellers had agreed to pay him had been advanced and spent before the last sheets issued from the press. It is painful to relate, that, twice in the course of the year which followed the publication of this great work, he was arrested and carried to sponging-houses,[8] and that he was twice indebted for his liberty to his excellent friend Richardson. It was still necessary for the man who had been formally saluted by the highest authority as dictator of the English language, to supply his wants by constant toil. He abridged his *Dictionary.* He proposed to bring out an edition of Shakespeare by subscription; and many subscribers sent in their names, and laid down their money; but he soon found the task so little to his taste that he turned to more attractive employments. He contributed many papers to a new monthly journal, which was called the *Literary Magazine.* Few of these papers have much interest; but among them was the very best thing that he ever wrote, a masterpiece both of reasoning and of satirical pleasantry, the review of Jenyns's[9] *Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.*

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[7] JUNIUS AND SKINNER—François Junius, a French philologist, and Stephen Skinner, an English philologist of some note. Dr. Johnson gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to Skinner in the preface to his *Dictionary.*

[8] SPONGING-HOUSES—Johnson's definition is as follows: "A house to which debtors are taken before commitment to prison, where bailiffs sponge upon them, or riot at their cost."

[9] JENYNS—Soame Jenyns. Boswell says, "Johnson's most exquisite essay in a literary magazine, and indeed anywhere, is this review."

XII

In the spring of 1758 Johnson put forth the first of a series of essays entitled the *Idler.* During two years these essays continued to appear weekly. They were eagerly read, widely circulated, and, indeed, impudently pirated[1] while they were still in the original form, and had a large sale when collected into volumes. The *Idler* may be described as a second part of the *Rambler*, somewhat livelier and somewhat weaker than the first part.

While Johnson was busied with his *Idlers*, his mother, who had accomplished her ninetieth year, died at Lichfield. It was long since he had seen her; but he had not failed to contribute largely, out of his small means, to her comfort. In order to defray the charges of her funeral, and to pay some debts which she had left, he wrote a little book in a single week, and sent off the sheets to the press without reading them over. A hundred pounds were paid him for the copyright; and the purchasers had great cause to be pleased with their bargain, for the book was *Rasselas*.

The success of *Rasselas* was great, though such ladies as Miss Lydia Languish[2] must have been grievously disappointed when they found that the new volume from the circulating library was little more than a dissertation on the author's favorite theme, the vanity of human wishes; that the Prince of Abyssinia was without a mistress, and the princess without a lover; and that the story set the hero and the heroine down exactly where it had taken them up. The style was the subject of much eager controversy. The *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review*[3] took different sides. Many readers pronounced the writer a pompous pedant,[4] who would never use a word of two syllables where it was possible to use a word of six, and who could not make a waiting woman relate her adventures without balancing every noun with another noun, and every epithet with another epithet. Another party, not less zealous, cited with delight numerous passages in which weighty meaning was expressed with accuracy, and illustrated with splendor. And both the censure and the praise were merited.

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[1] PIRATED—Published without the authorization of the author, and of course without compensation to him.

[2] LYDIA LANGUISH—A character in Sheridan's comedy *The Rivals*. She has a passion for romance, and refuses to marry the man selected by her aunt, but is ready to elope with him when wooed by him under another name.

[3] *Critical Review*—A literary critical review.

[4] PEDANT—One who makes an ostentatious display of his learning.

About the plan of *Rasselas* little was said by the critics; and yet the faults of the plan might seem to invite severe criticism. Johnson has frequently blamed Shakespeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place, and for ascribing to one age or nation the manners and opinions of another. Yet Shakespeare has not sinned in this way more grievously than Johnson. Rasselas and Imlac, Nekayah and Pekuah, are evidently meant to be Abyssinians of the eighteenth century; for the Europe which Imlac describes is the Europe of the eighteenth century; and the inmates of the Happy Valley talk familiarly of that law of gravitation which Newton[5] discovered, and which was not fully received, even at Cambridge,[6] till the eighteenth century. What a real company of Abyssinians would have been may be learned from Bruce's travels. But Johnson, not content with turning filthy savages ignorant of their letters, and gorged with raw steaks cut from living cows, into philosophers as eloquent and enlightened as himself or his friend Burke,[7] and into ladies as highly accomplished as Mrs. Lennox or Mrs. Sheridan,[8] transferred the whole domestic system of England to Egypt. Into a land of harems, a land of polygamy, a land where women are married without ever being seen, he introduced the flirtations and jealousies of our ballrooms. In a land where there is boundless liberty of divorce, wedlock is described as the indissoluble compact. "A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home and dream of each other. Such," says *Rasselas*, "is the common process of marriage." Such it may have been, and may still be, in London, but assuredly not at Cairo.[9] A writer who was guilty of such improprieties had little right to blame the poet[10] who made Hector quote Aristotle, and represented Julio Romano as flourishing in the days of the oracle of Delphi.

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[5] NEWTON—Sir Isaac Newton, an English philosopher and mathematician who formulated the law of gravitation. Newton died in 1727.

[6] CAMBRIDGE—The English University.

[7] BURKE—Edmund Burke, author of the *Speech on Conciliation*.

[8] MRS. LENNOX OR MRS. SHERIDAN—Mrs. C. Lennox, a novelist and poet. Johnson wrote a dedication for Mrs. Lennox's *Female Quixote*. Mrs. Sheridan was the mother of the dramatist Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and a novelist of some merit.

[9] CAIRO—The setting of a scene in *Rasselas*.

[10] THE POET—Shakespeare. In *Troilus and Cressida* Shakespeare makes Hector quote Aristotle, and the time of *A Winter's Tale* in which Julio Romano appears is much later than days of the Delphian oracle.

XIII

By such exertions as have been described, Johnson supported himself till the year 1762. In that year a great change in his circumstances took place. He had from a child been an enemy of the reigning dynasty.[1] His Jacobite prejudices had been exhibited with little disguise both in his works and in his conversation. Even in his massy and elaborate *Dictionary*, he had, with a strange want of taste and judgment, inserted bitter and contumelious[2] reflections on the Whig party. The excise,[3] which was a favorite resource of Whig financiers, he had designated as a hateful tax. He had railed against the commissioners of excise in language so coarse that they had seriously thought of prosecuting him. He had with difficulty been prevented from holding up the Lord Privy Seal[4] by name as an example of the meaning of the word "renegade." A pension he had defined as pay given to a state hireling to betray his country; a pensioner, as a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey a master. It seemed unlikely that the author of these definitions would himself be pensioned. But that was a time of wonders. George III had ascended the throne, and had, in the course of a few months, disgusted many of the old friends, and conciliated many of the old enemies, of his house. The city was becoming mutinous.[5] Oxford was becoming loyal. Cavendishes[6] and Bentincks were murmuring. Somersets and Wyndhams[7] were hastening to kiss hands. The head of the treasury was now Lord Bute,[8] who was a Tory, and could have no objection to Johnson's Toryism. Bute wished to be thought a patron of men of letters; and Johnson was one of the most eminent and one of the most needy men of letters in Europe. A pension of three hundred a year was graciously offered, and with very little hesitation accepted.

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[1] REIGNING DYNASTY—The house of Hanover or Brunswick which came to the throne after the death of Queen Anne.

[2] CONTUMELIOUS—Insolent, scornful, contemptuous.

[3] THE EXCISE—Johnson defined the excise as follows: "A hateful tax, levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom the Excise is paid."

[4] LORD PRIVY SEAL—This official was at the time Lord Gower. Johnson said: "You know, Sir, Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interests. When I came to the word *Renegado,* after telling that it meant 'one who deserts to the enemy, a revolter,' I added, *Sometimes we say a GOWER*. Thus it went to the press: but the printer had more wit than I and struck it out."

This event produced a change in Johnson's whole way of life. For the first time since his boyhood, he no longer felt the daily goad urging him to the daily toil. He was at liberty, after thirty years of anxiety and drudgery, to indulge his constitutional indolence, to lie in bed till two in the afternoon, and to sit up talking till four in the morning, without fearing either the printer's devil[9] or the sheriff's officer.

One laborious task, indeed, he had bound himself to perform. He had received large subscriptions for his promised edition of

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[5] MUTINOUS—With the accession of George III, the almost unbroken power of the Whigs was greatly weakened. Macaulay's statement means that London which was a Whig stronghold was now mutinous in the sense of not being in sympathy with the government. By the same token, the expression "Oxford was becoming loyal" means that Oxford where Tory sentiment was strong was now supporting the government.

[6] CAVENDISHES AND BENTINCKS—Powerful Whig families. Macaulay means that the Whigs were now attacking the government as the Tories had done in the days of Walpole.

[7] SOMERSETS AND WYNDHAMS—These were Tory families. The expression "hastening to kiss hands" refers to the practice on the part of incoming ministers of kissing the sovereign's hand. Macaulay means that the Tories now had hope of being called into the Cabinet.

[8] BUTE—Bute is best remembered as the Prime Minister who in his attempt to execute the king's colonial policy lost the American colonies.

[9] PRINTER'S DEVIL—A term designating the youngest apprentice in a printing establishment. It was the printer's devil who was generally sent to an author for copy. Macaulay therefore means that Johnson was no longer under the necessity of writing for a living.

Shakespeare; he had lived on those subscriptions during some years; and he could not, without disgrace, omit to perform his part of the contract. His friends repeatedly exhorted him to make an effort; and he repeatedly resolved to do so. But, notwithstanding their exhortations and his resolutions, month followed month, year followed year, and nothing was done. He prayed fervently against his idleness; he determined, as often as he received the sacrament, that he would no longer doze away and trifle away his time; but the spell under which he lay resisted prayer and sacrament. His private notes at this time are made up of self-reproaches. "My indolence," he wrote on Easter Eve in 1764, "has sunk into grosser sluggishness. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what was become of the last year." Easter, 1765, came, and found him still in the same state. "My time," he wrote, "has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me." Happily for his honor, the charm which held him captive was at length broken by no gentle or friendly hand. He had been weak enough to pay serious attention to a story about a ghost which haunted a house in Cock Lane,[10] and had actually gone himself, with some of his friends, at one in the morning, to St. John's Church, Clerkenwell, in the hope of receiving a communication from the perturbed spirit. But the spirit, though adjured with all solemnity, remained obstinately silent; and it soon appeared that a naughty girl of eleven had been amusing herself by making fools of so many philosophers. Churchill,[11] who, confident in his powers, drunk with popularity, and burning with party spirit, was looking for some man of established fame and Tory politics to insult, celebrated the Cock Lane ghost in three cantos, nicknamed Johnson Pomposo, asked where the book was which had been so long promised and so liberally paid for, and directly accused the great moralist of cheating. This terrible word proved effectual; and in October, 1765, appeared, after a delay of nine years, the new edition of Shakespeare.

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[10] COCK LANE—In 1762 the curiosity of London seems to have been aroused by the story of a young girl living in Cock Lane, a district of London, who pretended that she was in communication with the spirit world. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* Johnson wrote an account of the investigation and exposure of the fraud. Macaulay's statement that he went in the hopes of receiving a communication is not in accord with the facts.

[11] CHURCHILL—Charles Churchill, a wit and satirist of the period who was an extremely partisan Whig, hence "burning with party spirit." He ridiculed Johnson in a piece called *The Ghost,* saying:

"He for subscribers baits his hook,
And takes their cash—but where's the book?"

XIV

This publication saved Johnson's character for honesty, but added nothing[1] to the fame of his abilities and learning. The preface, though it contains some good passages, is not in his best manner. The most valuable notes are those in which he had an opportunity of showing how attentively he had, during many years, observed human life and human nature. The best specimen is the note on the character of Polonius.[2] Nothing so good is to be found even in Wilhelm Meister's[3] admirable examination of Hamlet. But here praise must end. It would be difficult to name a more slovenly, a more worthless, edition of any great classic. The reader may turn over play after play without finding one happy conjectural emendation, or one ingenious and satisfactory explanation of a passage which had baffled preceding commentators. Johnson had, in his prospectus, told the world that he was peculiarly fitted for the task which he had undertaken, because he had, as a lexicographer, been under the necessity of taking a wider view of the English language than any of his predecessors. That his knowledge of our literature was extensive, is indisputable. But, unfortunately, he had altogether neglected that very part of our literature with which it is especially desirable that an editor of Shakespeare should be conversant. It is dangerous to assert a negative. Yet little will be risked by the assertion, that in the two folio volumes of the *English Dictionary* there is not a single passage quoted from any dramatist of the Elizabethan age, except Shakespeare and Ben.[4] Even from Ben the quotations are few. Johnson might easily, in a few months, have made himself well acquainted with every old play that was extant. But it never seems to have occurred to him that this was a necessary preparation for the work which he had undertaken. He would doubtless have admitted that it would be the height of absurdity in a man who was not familiar with the works of Æschylus[5] and Euripides to publish an edition of Sophocles. Yet he ventured to publish an edition of Shakespeare without having ever in his life, as far as can be discovered, read a single scene of Massinger,[6] Ford, Dekker, Webster, Marlowe, Beaumont, or Fletcher. His detractors were noisy and scurrilous. Those who most loved and honored him had little to say in praise of the manner in which he had discharged the duty of a commentator. He had, however, acquitted himself of a debt which had long lain heavy on his conscience, and he sank back into the repose from which the sting of satire had roused him. He long continued to live upon the fame which he had already won. He was honored by the University of Oxford with a doctor's degree, by the Royal Academy[7] with a professorship, and by the King with an interview, in which his Majesty most graciously expressed a hope

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[1] ADDED NOTHING—This is far from true. Sir Walter Raleigh says, "A reader of the new Variorum edition of Shakespeare soon falls into the habit, when he meets an obscure passage, of consulting Johnson's note before the others. . . . He has been neglected and deprecated ever since the nineteenth century brought in the new aesthetic and philosophical criticism. The twentieth century, it seems likely, will treat him more respectfully."

[2] POLONIUS—A character in *Hamlet*.

[3] WILHELM MEISTER—A character in Goethe's autobiographical novel *Wil-*

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helm Meister's Apprenticeship into whose mouth Goethe puts his own criticism of *Hamlet*.

[4] Ben—Ben Jonson, next to Shakespeare, perhaps the greatest of Elizabethan dramatists.

[5] Æschylus and Euripides . . . Sophocles—The great poets and tragic dramatists of ancient Greece.

[6] Massinger, etc.—The principal dramatists of the Elizabethan period.

[7] Royal Academy—The Royal Academy, founded in 1768 by George II for the encouragement of fine arts. The first president was Johnson's friend, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great painter. Johnson was appointed Professor of Ancient Literature. This was an honorary title, merely, involving no work, and giving him no salary.

that so excellent a writer would not cease to write. In the interval, however, between 1765 and 1775, Johnson published only two or three political tracts, the longest of which he could have produced in forty-eight hours, if he had worked as he worked on the *Life of Savage* and on *Rasselas*.

XV

But, though his pen was now idle, his tongue was active. The influence exercised by his conversation, directly upon those with whom he lived, and indirectly on the whole literary world, was altogether without a parallel. His colloquial talents were, indeed, of the highest order. He had strong sense, quick discernment, wit, humor, immense knowledge of literature and of life, and an infinite store of curious anecdotes. As respected style, he spoke far better than he wrote. Every sentence which dropped from his lips was as correct in structure as the most nicely balanced period[1] of the *Rambler*. But in his talk there were no pompous triads,[2] and little more than a fair proportion of words in "osity" and "ation." All was simplicity, ease, and vigor. He uttered his short, weighty, and pointed sentences with a power of voice and a justness and energy of emphasis of which the effect was rather increased than diminished by the rollings of his huge form, and by the asthmatic gaspings and puffings in which the peals of his eloquence generally ended. Nor did the laziness which made him unwilling to sit down to his desk prevent him from giving instruction or entertainment orally. To discuss questions of taste, of learning, of casuistry,[3] in language so exact and so forcible that it might have been printed without the alteration of a word, was to him no exertion, but a pleasure. He loved, as he said, to fold his legs and have his talk out. He was ready to bestow the overflowings of his full mind on anybody who would start a subject—on a fellow-passenger in a stage-coach, or on the person who sat at the same table with him in an eating-house. But his conversation was nowhere so brilliant and striking as when he was surrounded by a few friends, whose abilities and knowledge enabled them, as he once expressed it, to send him back every ball that he threw. Some of these, in 1764, formed themselves into a club,[4] which gradually became a formidable power in the commonwealth of letters. The verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known over all London, and were sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheets to the service of[5] the trunk maker and the pastry cook. Nor shall we think this strange when we consider what great and various talents and acquirements met in the little fraternity. Goldsmith[6] was the representative of poetry and light literature; Reynolds,[7] of the arts; Burke,[8] of political eloquence and political philosophy. There, too, were Gibbon,[9] the greatest historian, and Jones,[10] the greatest linguist, of the age. Garrick brought to the meetings his inexhaustible pleasantry, his incomparable mimicry, and his consummate knowledge of stage effect. Among the most constant attendants were two high-born and high-bred gentlemen, closely bound together by friendship, but of widely different characters and habits—Bennett Langton,[11] distinguished by his skill in Greek literature, by the orthodoxy of his opinions, and by the sanctity of his life; and Topham Beauclerk,[12] renowned for his amours, his knowledge of the gay world, his fastidious taste, and his sarcastic wit. To predominate over such a society was not easy. Yet even over such a society Johnson predominated. Burke might, indeed, have disputed the supremacy to which others were under the necessity of submitting. But Burke, though not generally a very patient listener, was content to take the second part when Johnson was present; and the club itself, consisting of so many eminent men, is to this day popularly designated as Johnson's Club.

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[1] PERIOD—Sentence, usually what we call a periodic sentence.

[2] POMPOUS TRIADS—An allusion to Johnson's habit of writing long sentences composed of three or more coördinate members.

[3] CASUISTRY—Probably used here to mean simply questions of morality, although the term strictly speaking refers to attempts to settle questions of right and wrong on grounds other than morality.

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[4] CLUB—Boswell says, "Soon after his return to London . . . was founded that Club which existed long without a name, but at Mr. Garrick's funeral became distinguished by the title of The Literary Club. . . . They met at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street, Soho, one evening in every week, at seven, and generally continued their conversation until a pretty late hour."

[5] TO THE SERVICE OF—That is for lining either the interior of trunks or the cook's dishes.

[6] GOLDSMITH—Oliver Goldsmith. See *The Deserted Village* in *PROSE AND POETRY Tenth Year.*

[7] REYNOLDS—Sir Joshua Reynolds, referred to above.

[8] BURKE—Edmund Burke.

[9] GIBBON—Edward Gibbon, a historian whose great work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is still authoritative. Boswell thought that he saw in Gibbon's style the influence of Johnson.

[10] JONES—Sir William Jones, a famous student of oriental languages and culture.

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[11] BENNETT LANGTON—A great scholar, of whom Johnson once said, "The earth does not bear a worthier man than Bennett Langton."

[12] TOPHAM BEAUCLERK—A country gentleman and a great-grandson of Charles II. Johnson entertained a great affection for him. When Beauclerk lay dying Johnson said, "Sir, I would walk to the extent of the diameter of the earth to save Beauclerk."

XVI

Among the members of this celebrated body was one to whom it has owed the greater part of its celebrity, yet who was regarded with little respect by his brethren, and had not without difficulty obtained a seat among them. This was James Boswell,[1] a young Scotch lawyer, heir to an honorable name and a fair estate. That he was a coxcomb and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who were acquainted with him. That he could not reason, that he had no wit, no humor, no eloquence, is apparent from his writings. And yet his writings are read beyond the Mississippi and under the Southern Cross,[2] and are likely to be read as long as the English exists, either as a living or as a dead language. Nature had made him a slave and an idolater. His mind resembled those creepers which the botanists call parasites, and which can

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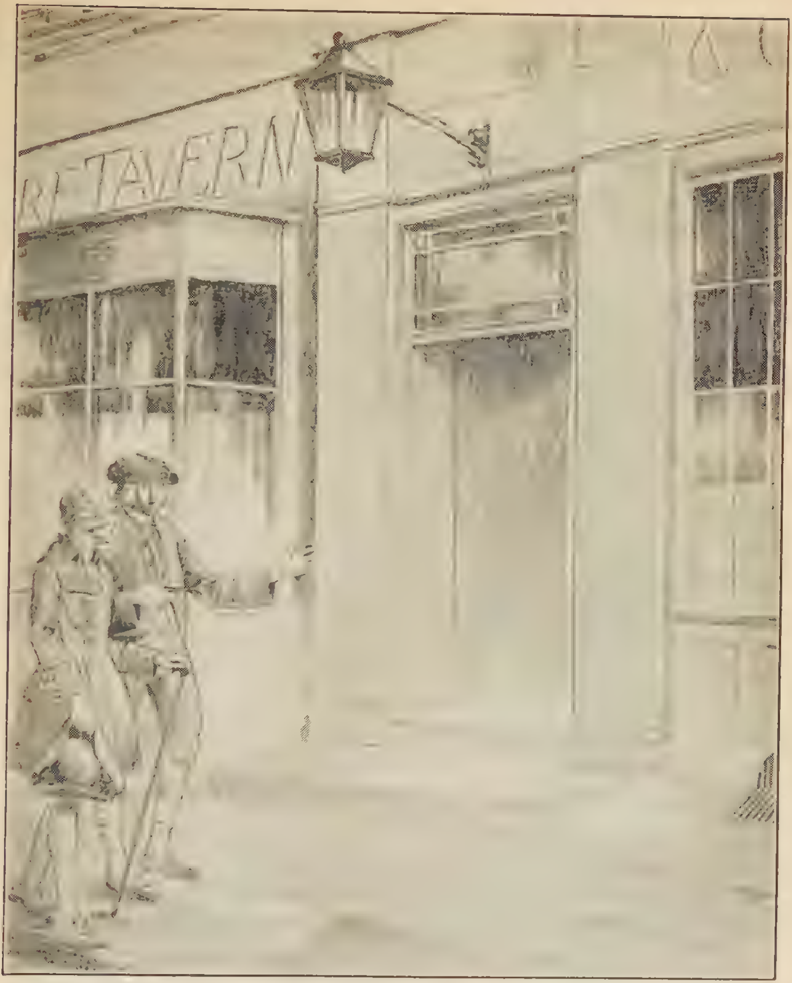
[1] JAMES BOSWELL—Johnson's famous biographer. Macaulay's estimate of him is very much at variance with the facts.

[2] SOUTHERN CROSS—A constellation in the southern hemisphere.



Every quarrel was soon made up. During twenty years, the disciple continued to worship the master; the master continued to scold the disciple, to sneer at him, and to love him.—Macaulay's *Essay on Johnson.*

subsist only by clinging round the stems, and imbibing the juices, of stronger plants. He must have fastened himself on somebody. He might have fastened himself on Wilkes,[3] and have become the fiercest patriot in the Bill of Rights Society. He might have fastened himself on Whitefield,[4] and have become the loudest field preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. In a happy hour he fastened himself on Johnson. The pair might seem ill-matched. For Johnson had early been prejudiced against Boswell's country. To a man of Johnson's strong understanding and irritable temper, the silly egotism and adulation of Boswell must have been as teasing as the constant buzz of a fly. Johnson hated to be questioned; and Boswell was eternally catechising him on all kinds of subjects, and sometimes propounded such questions as, "What would you do, sir, if you were locked up in a tower with a baby?" Johnson was a water drinker, and Boswell was a winebibber, and, indeed, little better than an habitual sot.[5] It was impossible that there should be perfect harmony between two such companions. Indeed, the great man was sometimes provoked into fits of passion, in which he said things which the small man, during a few hours, seriously resented. Every quarrel, however, was soon made up. During twenty years, the disciple continued to worship the master: the master continued to scold the disciple, to sneer at him, and to love him. The two friends ordinarily resided at a great distance from each other. Boswell practised in the Parliament House of Edinburgh, and could pay only occasional visits to London. During those visits, his chief business was to watch Johnson, to discover all Johnson's habits, to turn the conversation to subjects about which Johnson was likely to say something remarkable, and to fill quarto[6] notebooks with minutes of what Johnson had said. In this way were gathered the materials out of which was afterwards constructed the most interesting biographical work in the world.

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[3] WILKES—John Wilkes, editor of the *North Britain* who took the lead in the struggle which put an end to the secrecy of Parliamentary proceedings. The Bill of Rights Society was an association formed for the purposes of assisting Wilkes in his struggle with the government and advocating Parliamentary reform.

[4] WHITEFIELD—George Whitefield, a famous Methodist preacher. See the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* in *PROSE AND POETRY Tenth Year* for an account of Whitefield's visit to America.

[5] HABITUAL SOT—An unwarranted statement.

[6] QUARTO—Printer's designation for a book the pages of which are made by folding a sheet of paper twice, thus making a signature of four sheets or eight pages.

XVII

Soon after the club began to exist, Johnson formed a connection less important, indeed, to his fame, but much more important to his happiness, than his connection with Boswell. Henry Thrale, one of the most opulent brewers in the kingdom, a man of sound and cultivated understanding, rigid principles, and liberal spirit, was married to one of those clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert young women who are perpetually doing or saying what is not exactly right, but who, do or say what they may, are always agreeable. In 1765 the Thrales became acquainted with Johnson, and the acquaintance ripened fast into friendship. They were astonished and delighted by the brilliancy of his conversation. They were flattered by finding that a man so widely celebrated preferred their house to any other in London. Even the peculiarities which seemed to unfit him for civilized society—his gesticulations, his rollings, his puffings, his mutterings, the strange way in which he put on his clothes, the ravenous eagerness with which he devoured his dinner, his fits of melancholy, his fits of anger, his frequent rudeness, his occasional ferocity—increased the interest which his new associates took in him. For these things were the cruel marks left behind by a life which had been one long conflict with disease and with adversity. In a vulgar hack writer, such oddities would have excited only disgust; but in a man of genius, learning, and virtue, their effect was to add pity to admiration and esteem. Johnson soon had an apartment at the brewery in Southwark,[1] and a still more pleasant apartment at the villa of his friends on Streatham Common.[2] A large part of every year he passed in those abodes—abodes which must have seemed magnificent and luxurious indeed, when compared with the dens in which he had generally been lodged. But his chief pleasures were derived from what the astronomer of his Abyssinian tale called "the endearing elegance of female friendship." Mrs. Thrale rallied him, soothed him, coaxed him, and, if she sometimes provoked him by her flippancy, made ample amends by listening to his reproofs with angelic sweetness of temper. When he was diseased in body and in mind, she was the most tender of nurses. No comfort that wealth could purchase, no contrivance that womanly ingenuity, set to work by womanly compassion, could devise, was wanting to his sick-room. He requited her kindness by an affection pure as the affection of a father, yet delicately tinged with a gallantry which, though awkward, must have been more flattering than the attentions of a crowd of the fools who gloried in the names, now obsolete, of buck and maccaroni.[3] It should seem that a full half of Johnson's life, during about sixteen years, was passed under the roof of the Thrales. He accompanied the family sometimes to Bath,[4] and sometimes to Brighton, once to Wales, and once to Paris. But he had at the same time a house in one of the narrow and gloomy courts on the north of Fleet Street. In the garrets was his library, a large and miscellaneous collection of books, falling to pieces, and begrimed with dust. On a lower floor he sometimes, but very rarely, regaled a friend with a plain dinner—a veal pie, or a leg of lamb and spinach, and a rice pudding. Nor was the dwelling uninhabited during his long absences. It was the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together. At the head of the establishment, Johnson had placed an old lady named Williams, whose chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty. But, in spite of her murmurs and reproaches, he gave an asylum[5] to another lady who was as poor as herself, Mrs. Desmoulins, whose family he had known many years before in Staffordshire. Room was found for the daughter of Mrs. Desmoulins, and for another destitute damsel, who was generally addressed as Miss Carmichael, but whom her generous host called Polly. An old quack doctor named Levett, who bled[6] and dosed coal heavers and hackney coachmen, and received for fees crusts of bread, bits of bacon, glasses of gin, and sometimes a little copper, completed this strange menagerie. All these poor creatures were at constant war with each other and with Johnson's negro servant Frank. Sometimes, indeed, they transferred their hostilities from the servant to the master, complained that a better table was not kept for them, and railed or maundered[7] till their benefactor was glad to make his escape to Streatham, or to the Mitre Tavern.[8] And yet he, who was generally the haughtiest and most irritable of mankind, who was but too prompt to resent anything which looked like a slight on the part of a purse-proud bookseller, or of a noble and powerful patron, bore patiently from mendicants,[9] who but for his bounty must have gone to the workhouse, insults more provoking than those for which he had knocked down Osborne, and bidden defiance to Chesterfield. Year after year Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins, Polly and Levett, continued to torment him and to live upon him.

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[1] SOUTHWARK—The district of London south of the Thames where Thrale's brewery was situated.

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[2] STREATHAM COMMON—A residential section of London below Southwark.

[3] BUCK AND MACCARONI—These were colloquial expressions applied in Johnson's time to the dandies of the town.

[4] BATH—A fashionable resort on the Avon. Brighton was a resort on the English Channel.

[5] Asylum—Shelter, refuge.

[6] Bled—The practice of bleeding or the letting out of venous blood was formerly much employed in medicine, especially in reducing fevers.

[7] Maundered—Grumbled, murmured.

[8] Mitre Tavern—A famous tavern in Fleet Street.

[9] Mendicants—Beggars.

XVIII

The course of life which has been described was interrupted in Johnson's sixty-fourth year by an important event. He had early read an account of the Hebrides,[1] and had been much interested by learning that there was so near him a land peopled by a race

[1] Hebrides—A group of islands lying off the west coast of Scotland.

which was still as rude and simple as in the middle ages. A wish to become intimately acquainted with a state of society so utterly unlike all that he had ever seen, frequently crossed his mind. But it is not probable that his curiosity would have overcome his habitual sluggishness and his love of the smoke, the mud, and the cries of London, had not Boswell importuned him to attempt the adventure, and offered to be his squire. At length, in August, 1773, Johnson crossed the Highland line, and plunged courageously into what was then considered, by most Englishmen, as a dreary and perilous wilderness. After wandering about two months through the Celtic region, sometimes in rude boats which did not protect him from the rain, and sometimes on small shaggy ponies which could hardly bear his weight, he returned to his old haunts with a mind full of new images and new theories. During the following year he employed himself in recording his adventures. About the beginning of 1775, his *Journey to the Hebrides* was published, and was, during some weeks, the chief subject of conversation in all circles in which any attention was paid to literature. The book is still read with pleasure. The narrative is entertaining; the speculations, whether sound or unsound, are always ingenious; and the style, though too stiff and pompous, is somewhat easier and more graceful than that of his early writings. His prejudice against the Scotch had at length become little more than matter of jest; and whatever remained of the old feeling had been effectually removed by the kind and respectful hospitality with which he had been received in every part of Scotland. It was, of course, not to be expected that an Oxonian Tory should praise the Presbyterian polity[2] and ritual, or that an eye accustomed to the hedgerows and parks of England should not be struck by the bareness of Berwickshire and East Lothian.[3] But even in censure Johnson's tone is not unfriendly. The most enlightened Scotchmen, with Lord Mansfield[4] at their head, were well pleased. But some foolish and ignorant Scotchmen were moved to anger by a little unpalatable truth which was mingled with much eulogy, and assailed him whom they chose to consider as the enemy of their country with libels much more dishonorable to their country than anything that he had ever said or written. They published paragraphs in the newspapers, articles in the magazines, sixpenny pamphlets, five-shilling books. One scribbler abused Johnson for being blear-eyed; another for being a pensioner; a third informed the world that one of the doctor's uncles had been convicted of felony in Scotland, and had found that there was in that country one tree capable of supporting the weight of an Englishman. Macpherson,[5] whose *Fingal* had been proved in the *Journey* to be an impudent forgery, threatened to take vengeance with a cane. The only effect of this threat was that Johnson reiterated the charge of forgery in the most contemptuous terms, and walked about, during some time, with a cudgel, which, if the impostor had not been too wise to encounter it, would assuredly have descended upon him, to borrow the sublime language of his own epic poem, "like a hammer on the red son of the furnace."

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[2] POLITY—Government.

[3] BERWICKSHIRE AND EAST LOTHIAN—Districts of northern Scotland.

[4] LORD MANSFIELD—One of the most famous of the chief justices of England, who was a Scotchman.

Of other assailants, Johnson took no notice whatever. He had early resolved never to be drawn into controversy; and he adhered to his resolution with a steadfastness which is the more extraordinary because he was, both intellectually and morally, of the stuff of which controversialists are made. In conversation, he was a singularly eager, acute, and pertinacious disputant. When at a loss for good reasons, he had recourse to sophistry;[6] and when heated by altercation,[7] he made unsparing use of sarcasm and invective. But when he took his pen in his hand, his whole character seemed to be changed. A hundred bad writers misrepresented him and reviled him; but not one of the hundred could boast of having been thought by him worthy of a refutation, or even of a retort. The Kenricks,[8] Campbells, MacNicols, and Hendersons did their best to annoy him, in the hope that he would give them importance by answering them. But the reader will in vain search his works for any allusion to Kenrick or Campbell, to MacNicol or Henderson. One Scotchman, bent on vindicating the fame of Scotch learning, defied him to the combat in a detestable Latin hexameter—

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[5] MACPHERSON—James Macpherson, a Scottish schoolmaster who in 1762 published an epic poem, *Fingal*, which he alleged was a translation of a Gaelic poet, Ossian, of the third century. Johnson contended that the work was a forgery, but the question remains unsettled to this day.

[6] SOPHISTRY—That is, a kind of reasoning which on the face seems to be sound, but in reality is fallacious.

[7] ALTERCATION—Dispute.

> Maxime, si tu vis, cupio contedere tecum.[9]

But Johnson took no notice of the challenge. He had learned, both from his own observation and from literary history, in which he was deeply read, that the place of books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written about them, but by what is written in them; and that an author whose works are likely to live is very unwise if he stoops to wrangle with detractors [10] whose works are certain to die. He always maintained that fame was a shuttlecock,[11] which could be kept up only by being beaten back, as well as beaten forward, and which would soon fall if there were only one battledore. No saying was oftener in his mouth than that fine apothegm [12] of Bentley,[13] that no man was ever written down but by himself.

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[8] KENRICKS, etc.—Scotchman who assailed Johnson.

[9] MAXIME, etc.—If you are willing, greatly do I desire to contend with thee.

[10] DETRACTORS—Those who endeavored to belittle his reputation.

[11] SHUTTLECOCK—A rounded piece of cork into which feathers have been stuck. It is batted back and forth in the game of battledore and shuttlecock, the bat being called a battledore.

[12] APOTHEGM—A compact, sententious remark.

[13] BENTLEY—Richard Bentley, a famous English scholar, a master of Trinity College. The saying is "No man was ever written out of reputation but by himself."

XIX

Unhappily, a few months after the appearance of the *Journey to the Hebrides*, Johnson did what none of his envious assailants could have done, and to a certain extent succeeded in writing himself down. The disputes between England and her American Colonies had reached a point at which no amicable adjustment was possible. Civil war was evidently impending; and the ministers seem to have thought that the eloquence of Johnson might with advantage be employed to inflame the nation against the opposition here, and against the rebels beyond the Atlantic. He had already written two or three tracts in defence of the foreign and domestic policy of the Government; and those tracts, though hardly worthy of him, were much superior to the crowd of pamphlets which lay on the counters of Almon and Stockdale.[1] But his *Taxation no Tyranny*[2] was a pitiable failure. The very title was a silly phrase, which can have been recommended to his choice by nothing but a jingling alliteration[3] which he ought to have despised. The arguments were such as boys use in debating societies. The pleasantry was as awkward as the gambols of a hippopotamus. Even Boswell was forced to own that in this unfortunate piece he could detect no trace of his master's powers. The general opinion was, that the strong faculties which had produced the *Dictionary* and the *Rambler* were beginning to feel the effect of time and of disease, and that the old man would best consult his credit by writing no more.

But this was a great mistake. Johnson had failed, not because his mind was less vigorous than when he wrote *Rasselas* in the evenings of a week, but because he had foolishly chosen, or suffered others to choose for him, a subject such as he would at no time have been competent to treat. He was in no sense a statesman. He never willingly read, or thought, or talked about, affairs of state. He loved biography, literary history, the history of manners; but political history was positively distasteful to him. The question at issue between the Colonies and the mother country was a question about which he had really nothing to say. He failed, therefore, as the greatest men must fail when they attempt to do that for which they are unfit; as Burke would have failed if Burke had tried to write comedies like those of Sheridan;[4] as Reynolds would have failed if Reynolds had tried to paint landscapes like those of Wilson.[5] Happily, Johnson soon had an opportunity of proving most signally that his failure was not to be ascribed to intellectual decay.

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[1] ALMON AND STOCKDALE—Well-known booksellers and publishers.

[2] *Taxation no Tyranny*—Johnson contended in this pamphlet that the Americans were represented in Parliament inasmuch as every member of Parliament was a representative of the Empire.

[3] JINGLING ALLITERATION—An allusion to the alliteration in the words "Taxation no Tyranny."

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[4] SHERIDAN—Richard Brinsley Sheridan, next to Goldsmith the greatest dramatist of his day. His well-known dramas, *The Rivals* and *A School for Scandal,* are still to be seen on the stage.

[5] WILSON—Richard Wilson, one of the greatest of English landscape painters.

XX

On Easter Eve, 1777, some persons, deputed by a meeting which consisted of forty of the first booksellers in London, called upon him. Though he had some scruples about doing business at that season, he received his visitors with much civility. They came to inform him that a new edition of the English poets, from Cowley[1] downwards, was in contemplation, and to ask him to furnish short biographical prefaces. He readily undertook the task, a task for which he was pre-eminently qualified. His knowledge of the literary history of England since the Restoration was unrivaled. That knowledge he had derived partly from books, and partly from sources which had long been closed: from old Grub Street traditions; from the talk of forgotten poetasters[2] and pamphleteers[3] who had long been lying in parish vaults; from the recollections of such men as Gilbert Walmesley, who had conversed with the wits of Button;[4] Cibber,[5] who had mutilated the plays of two generations of dramatists; Orrery,[6] who had been admitted to the society of Swift; and Savage,[7] who had rendered services of no very honorable kind to Pope. The biographer, therefore, sat down to his task with a mind full of matter. He had at first intended to give only a paragraph to every minor poet, and only four or five pages to the greatest name. But the flood of anecdote and criticism overflowed the narrow channel. The work, which was originally meant to consist only of a few sheets, swelled into ten volumes—small volumes, it is true, and not closely printed. The first four appeared in 1779, the remaining six in 1781.

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[1] COWLEY—Abraham Cowley, a poet of the age of Milton.

[2] POETASTERS—Inferior poets, rhymers.

[3] PAMPHLETEERS, etc.—That is, long dead.

[4] BUTTON—Button's was a famous coffee house in London frequented by Addison, Steele, Pope, Swift, and others.

[5] CIBBER—Colley Cibber, an actor, dramatist, and theater manager. In saying that Cibber had "mutilated the plays of two generations," Macaulay refers to the fact that he had made over many old plays for his stage. Cibber was Poet Laureate under George II.

The *Lives of the Poets* are, on the whole, the best of Johnson's works. The narratives are as entertaining as any novel. The remarks on life and on human nature are eminently shrewd and profound. The criticisms are often excellent, and, even when grossly and provokingly unjust, well deserve to be studied; for, however erroneous they may be, they are never silly. They are the judgments of a mind trammeled[8] by prejudice, and deficient in sensibility,[9] but vigorous and acute. They, therefore, generally contain a portion of valuable truth which deserves to be separated from the alloy; and at the very worst they mean something—a praise to which much of what is called criticism in our time has no pretensions.

Savage's *Life* Johnson reprinted nearly as it had appeared in 1744. Whoever, after reading that life, will turn to the other lives, will be struck by the difference of style. Since Johnson had been at ease in his circumstances, he had written little and had talked much. When, therefore, he, after the lapse of years, resumed his pen, the mannerism which he had contracted while he was in the constant habit of elaborate composition was less perceptible than formerly; and his diction frequently had a colloquial ease which it had formerly wanted. The improvement may be discerned by a skilful critic in the *Journey to the Hebrides;* and in the *Lives of the Poets* is so obvious, that it cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader.

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[6] ORRERY—The Earl of Orrery, a minor writer who was acquainted with Swift, the author of *Gulliver's Travels*, about whom he published a book.

[7] SAVAGE—Richard Savage. The service here referred to consisted in Savage's furnishing Pope with scandal and matters of personal history with respect to other authors. Pope made use of this in his satirical piece *The Dunciad*, a poem in which he satirized a number of his contemporaries, including Cibber.

[8] TRAMMELED—Encumbered.

[9] SENSIBILITY—Feeling or emotion.

Among the lives the best are, perhaps, those of Cowley, Dryden,[10] and Pope. The very worst is, beyond all doubt, that of Gray.[11]

This great work at once became popular. There was, indeed, much just and much unjust censure; but even those who were loudest in blame were attracted by the book in spite of themselves. Malone[12] computed the gains of the publishers at five or six thousand pounds. But the writer was very poorly remunerated. Intending at first to write very short prefaces, he had stipulated for only two hundred guineas. The booksellers, when they saw how far his performance had surpassed his promise, added only another hundred. Indeed, Johnson, though he did not despise, or affect to despise, money, and though his strong sense and long experience ought to have qualified him to protect his own interests, seems to have been singularly unskilful and unlucky in his literary bargains. He was generally reputed the first English writer of his time; yet several writers of his time sold their copyrights for sums such as he never ventured to ask. To give a single instance, Robertson[13] received four thousand five hundred pounds for the *History of Charles V;* and it is no disrespect to the memory of Robertson to say that the *History of Charles V* is both a less valuable and less amusing book than the *Lives of the Poets.*

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[10] DRYDEN—The outstanding poet of the Restoration period.

[11] GRAY—Thomas Gray, author of *An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,* see *PROSE AND POETRY Tenth Year.*

[12] MALONE—Edmond Malone, editor of Shakespeare, scholar and an able literary critic. He also edited Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*

[13] ROBERTSON—William Robertson, Scottish historian, best remembered for his *History of Charles V,* mentioned in Carlyle's *Essay on Burns.*

XXI

Johnson was now in his seventy-second year. The infirmities of age were coming fast upon him. That inevitable event of which he never thought without horror was brought near to him; and his whole life was darkened by the shadow of death. He had often to pay the cruel price of longevity. Every year he lost what could never be replaced. The strange dependents to whom he had given shelter, and to whom, in spite of their faults, he was strongly attached by habit, dropped off one by one; and in the silence of his home he regretted even the noise of their scolding matches. The kind and generous Thrale was no more; and it would have been well if his wife had been laid beside him. But she survived to be the laughingstock of those who had envied her, and to draw, from the eyes of the old man who had loved her beyond anything in the world, tears far more bitter than he would have shed over her grave. With some estimable and many agreeable qualities, she was not made to be independent. The control of a mind more steadfast than her own was necessary to her respectability. While she was restrained by her husband—a man of sense and firmness, indulgent to her taste in trifles, but always the undisputed master of his house—her worst offences had been impertinent jokes, white lies, and short fits of pettishness ending in sunny good humor. But he was gone; and she was left an opulent widow of forty, with strong sensibility, volatile[1] fancy, and slender judgment. She soon fell in love with a music master[2] from Brescia, in whom nobody but herself could discover anything to admire. Her pride, and perhaps some better feelings, struggled hard against this degrading passion; but the struggle irritated her nerves, soured her temper, and at length endangered her health. Conscious that her choice was one which Johnson could not approve, she became desirous to escape from his inspection. Her manner towards him changed. She was sometimes cold, and sometimes petulant. She did not conceal her joy when he left Streatham; she never pressed him to return; and if he came unbidden she received him in a manner which convinced him that he was no longer a welcome guest. He took the very intelligible hints which she gave. He read, for the last time, a chapter of the Greek Testament in the library which had been formed by himself. In a solemn and tender prayer, he commended the house and its inmates to the Divine protection, and with emotions which choked his voice, and convulsed his powerful frame, left forever that beloved home for the gloomy and desolate house behind Fleet Street, where the few and evil days which still remained to him were to run out. Here, in June, 1783, he had a paralytic stroke, from which, however, he recovered, and which does not appear to have at all impaired his intellectual faculties. But other maladies came thick upon him. His asthma tormented him day and night. Dropsical symptoms made their appearance. While sinking under a complication of diseases, he heard that the woman whose friendship had been the chief happiness of sixteen years of his life had married an Italian fiddler, that all London was crying shame upon her, and that the newspapers and magazines were filled with allusions to the Ephesian matron[3] and the two pictures in *Hamlet*.[4] He vehemently said that he would try to forget her existence. He never uttered her name. Every memorial of her which met his eye he flung into the fire. She, meanwhile, fled from the laughter and hisses of her countrymen and countrywomen to a land where she was unknown, hastened across Mount Cenis,[5] and learned, while passing a merry Christmas of concerts and lemonade parties at Milan, that the great man with whose name hers is inseparably associated had ceased to exist.

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[1] VOLATILE—That is, light-hearted, changeable, fickle.

[2] MUSIC MASTER—This was Gabriel Piozzi, a musician of ability. Macaulay's comment on Piozzi and on Mrs. Thrale is very far from being in accord with the facts.

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[3] EPHESIAN MATRON—The allusion is to a story in the *Satyricon* of Petronius. This matron while mourning the death of her husband fell in love with a soldier whom she married the same day.

[4] THE TWO PICTURES IN HAMLET—An allusion to the scene in *Hamlet* where Hamlet beginning with the words, "Look here, upon this picture, and on this," points out to his mother the difference between Hamlet's father and Claudius, whom his mother had married on the death of the former.

[5] MOUNT CENIS—The road across the Alps into Italy from France led over Mt. Cenis.

XXII

He had, in spite of much mental and much bodily affliction, clung vehemently to life. The feeling described in that fine but gloomy paper which closes the series of his *Idlers* seemed to grow stronger in him as his last hour drew near. He fancied that he should be able to draw his breath more easily in a southern climate, and would probably have set out for Rome and Naples, but for his fear of the expense of the journey. That expense, indeed, he had the means of defraying; for he had laid up about two thousand pounds, the fruit of labors which had made the fortune of several publishers. But he was unwilling to break in upon this hoard, and he seems to have wished even to keep its existence a secret. Some of his friends hoped that the Government might be induced to increase his pension to six hundred pounds a year; but this hope was disappointed, and he resolved to stand one English winter more. That winter was his last. His legs grew weaker; his breath grew shorter; the fatal water[1] gathered fast, in spite of incisions which he—courageous against pain, but timid against death—urged his surgeons to make deeper and deeper. Though the tender care which had mitigated his sufferings during months of sickness at Streatham was withdrawn, he was not left desolate. The ablest physicians and surgeons attended him, and refused to accept fees from him. Burke parted from him with deep emotion. Windham[2] sat much in the sick-room, arranged the pillows, and sent his own servant to watch at night by the bed. Frances Burney,[3] whom the old man had cherished with fatherly kindness, stood weeping at the door; while Langton, whose piety eminently qualified him to be an adviser and comforter at such a time, received the last pressure of his friend's hand within. When at length the moment, dreaded through so many years, came close, the dark cloud passed away from Johnson's mind. His temper became unusually patient and gentle; he ceased to think with terror of death and of that which lies beyond death; and he spoke much of the mercy of God and of the propitiation,[4] of Christ. In this serene frame of mind he died on the 13th of December, 1784. He was laid, a week later, in Westminster Abbey, among the eminent men of whom he had been the historian—Cowley [5] and Denham, Dryden and Congreve, Gay, Prior, and Addison.

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[1] FATAL WATER—The watery accumulation which accompanies dropsy.

[2] WINDHAM—William Windham, a Whig statesman and orator, and a member of Johnson's Club.

[3] FRANCES BURNEY—Afterwards Madame d'Arbley, novelist, best known, probably, as the author of *Evelina*.

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[4] PROPITIATION—The atonement made for our sins by the Saviour.

[5] COWLEY, etc.—Poets whom Johnson had written of in his *Lives of the Poets*.

XXIII

Since his death, the popularity of his works—the *Lives of the Poets*, and, perhaps, the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, excepted—has greatly diminished. His *Dictionary* has been altered by editors till it can scarcely be called his. An allusion to his *Rambler* or his *Idler* is not readily apprehended in literary circles. The fame even of *Rasselas* has grown somewhat dim. But, though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell's book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works; but the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons, and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say, that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the anfractuosities[1] of his intellect and of his temper serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man.

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[1] ANFRACTUOSITIES—That is, the windings and turnings.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

(1800–1859)

It would be difficult to imagine two men whose careers and personalities were more unlike than those of Samuel Johnson and Thomas Babington Macaulay. Of Macaulay, the novelist Thackeray wrote shortly after his death: "He is not a poet and man of letters merely, but citizen, statesman, a great British worthy. Almost from the first moment when he appears, amongst boys, amongst college students, amongst men, he is marked, and takes rank as a Great Englishman. All sorts of successes are easy to him."

In youth Macaulay had every advantage Johnson lacked. Born in 1800 in a family whose ample means could provide him all the advantages which education could give, Macaulay was sent at the age of twelve to an excellent private school at Shelford and later to Trinity College, Cambridge. At school and at college, in literature, in Latin, in history, and in debating he won "all the prizes to which he had a mind." At twenty-six he was admitted to the bar, and at an age when Samuel Johnson was leading a "vagrant and miserable life" in Lichfield, Macaulay had already written *Ivry* and *Naseby,* and on the invitation of Jeffry, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review,* had done the *Essay on Milton* which covered his breakfast table "with cards from the most distinguished personages in London society, inviting the brilliant young essayist to dinner."

One thing in common he had with Johnson—a precociousness in childhood, but even here the advantage may be said to have lain with Macaulay. At an age when most children are just being initiated into the mysteries of mud pies, Macaulay spent hours lying book in hand on a rug before the fireplace. Before he was eight he had written an ambitious *Compendium of Universal History* which showed a better acquaintance with world affairs than the average high school student can boast and before he was twelve he had done *Fingal, A Poem in Twelve Books* in imitation of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel.* Stories of his ability as a conversationalist in childhood are almost incredible, and to the end of his days he exhibited one of the most remarkable memories of which there is any record. As a child he could quote long passages from the poems of Scott after a single reading, and in age he said that he believed that he could recite the best half of *Paradise Lost.*

Macaulay's days, however, were not spent in literary leisure. Most of what he wrote was the product of early morning hours in a busy life. While he was still in Cambridge, financial reverses plunged his father into ruin, and Macaulay learned what it was to be thrown upon his own resources. It is said that he was obliged to sell the gold medal which he had won as a prize in Cambridge, but he could never have known the grinding and hopeless poverty which through the better part of his life was the lot of Samuel Johnson.

His public career may be said to have begun in 1830 with his entry into the House of Commons. The great Reform Bill of 1832 had not been passed and as in the days of Burke, seats in the Commons were still within the gift of great lords of the realm. As in the case of Burke, it was Macaulay's literary abilities which attracted the attention of a great political leader—Lord Lansdowne, through whose favor Macaulay first took his seat in the House. At this particular time England was agitated by the great problem of Parliamentary Reform. Macaulay's sympathies were wholly on the side of popular government. He refused to go into the Commons without first being assured that he might vote as he wished. This action is significant and is characteristic of the high integrity which Macaulay showed throughout his long public career. In the House he identified himself with what came to be known as the Liberal Party—a party which continued the traditions of the old Whigs. The years 1834–1838 were spent as legal advisor to the Supreme Council for India and in this capacity he played an important part in shaping Indian policy at a time when the government of that vast domain was passing from the East India Company to the Crown. The salary which this office gave him was a liberal one and enabled Macaulay to rehabilitate the family fortunes.

Macaulay had now become a national figure. On his return from India he was for a time Secretary of War in the Cabinet. In 1847 he suffered his first defeat for Parliament but the circumstances of that defeat can only increase one's admiration for him. His refusal to play party politics and his consistent stand for what appeared to him to be the right, led to a temporary loss of favor which was responsible for his failure to be returned to Westminster.

The freedom which he now had on his hands was welcome to him and he now set to work on a project he had long cherished—that of writing *A History of England* "from the accession of King James II down to the present time." The first two volumes of this work were published in 1848. It is upon his history that Macaulay's chief claim to literary fame rests. He is here at his best. (See Chapter III in this volume.) That gift for clear and vivid writing which makes the *Essay on Johnson* one of the most popular of school classics, was producing a picture of life and manners during the years covered, which makes the work a classic, unsurpassed to-day. The work spread Macaulay's fame far beyond the bounds of England. It was translated into a number of foreign languages and brought its author signal academic honors at home and abroad.

In 1852 occurred a remarkable vindication of Macaulay's course in politics. In that year the electors of Edinburgh who had previously defeated him, returned him to Parliament without solicitation on his part. Although he preferred to remain in retirement and refused a Cabinet post, Macaulay could not decline this testimony of regard and he again took his seat in the Commons. Another recognition of his public services came to him in 1857 when he was elevated to the peerage with the title of Baron Macaulay of Rothley, Rothley Temple in Leicestershire having been his birthplace.

During the later years of his life his strength was somewhat impaired by heart trouble so that he was never able to complete his *History of England*. In December, 1859, he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Shortly before his death he wrote in his diary, "October 25, 1859. My birthday. I am fifty-nine years old. Well, I have had a happy life. I do not know that any man whom I have seen close has had a happier."

MACAULAY'S STYLE OF WRITING

The thing which first attracted the attention of Macaulay's contemporaries was his style, and it is his style which to-day makes his *Essay on Johnson* one of the most popular of high school classics. He possessed to a degree unsurpassed before or since, a gift for vivid and rapid presentation of facts. In the *Essay on Johnson* he tells us nothing which cannot be learned from Boswell's ponderous *Life,* but in his few pages he has made Samuel Johnson a living figure to multitudes to whom Boswell will forever remain a closed book. It is true, perhaps, that his picture of Johnson is largely superficial; he does not interpret Johnson for us as Carlyle does Robert Burns, nor do we lay down his essay with the sense of having come into the presence of the substantial personality that was Samuel Johnson which we take away from Boswell's longer work.

Macaulay's chief vice, perhaps, was his sacrifice of fact to effect. His desire to make a striking statement not infrequently leads him to make an inaccurate one. Even when he is on the solid ground of fact, it is a habit which leads to a distorted perspective; one is likely to get the impression that Johnson's favorite diversion was snatching off ladies' slippers at dinner parties. Sometimes he is led into unwarranted misstatement and exaggeration, as in his portrait of Mrs. Thrale and his account of the circumstances surrounding her marriage to the "music-master from Brescia."

But with all his imperfections on his head, the best testimony to Macaulay's power as a writer is perhaps the persistent survival of both conceptions and misconceptions which originated with him. That Boswell was a sot and that Johnson's edition of Shakespeare added nothing to the fame of his abilities and learning are cases in point.

Perhaps the first characteristic of Macaulay's style which strikes the reader is his ability to catch up the substance of a chapter in a single paragraph. He had an eye for significant and picturesque detail, and the gift of accumulating these swiftly in order of climax, one detail re-enforcing another, in a single paragraph to create a single vivid impression. Of this ability there is a good illustration in the fifth paragraph of the *Essay*.

He possessed, further, the ability to state detail in a vivid, forceful, imaginative manner. First, his sentences are invariably short, and they are unmistakably clear; yet not a paragraph in the *Essay* suffers from monotony due to lack of variety in the sentences which make it up. In the second place, he knew the value of being concrete. We are not told that Johnson was a most peculiar person, and left to take the statement on faith. A dozen instances of his eccentricities are flung at us in half that number of sentences. And again, as Thackeray wrote, "he reads twenty books to write a sentence; he travels a hundred miles to make a line of description." His statement that Richard Savage "had seen life in all its forms" is such a mere general statement as anyone might make, but Macaulay does not leave it there—Savage had, we are told, "feasted among blue ribbons in St. James's Square, and had lain with fifty pounds' weight of irons on his legs in the condemned ward of Newgate." Allusion after allusion from history, from literature, and from life thus give the wings of imagination to pedestrian facts. Finally, Macaulay is the master of a balanced construction which he employs with telling effect to produce contrast, or antithesis, as in the following examples: "Literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public" and "But, though his pen was now idle, his tongue was active."

THE FAMOUS LETTER TO CHESTERFIELD

To the right honorable the Earl of Chesterfield

February 7, 1755.

My Lord,

I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of the "World," that two papers in which my dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre;*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well-pleased to have his all neglected, be it never so little.

Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Vergil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed until I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I shall conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

My Lord,
Your lordship's most humble,
Most obedient servant,
SAM JOHNSON.

JOHNSON AS A CONVERSATIONALIST

"The influence exercised by his [Johnson's] conversation, directly upon those with whom he lived, and indirectly on the whole literary world, was altogether without a parallel."—Macaulay.

Discuss the following quotations from Johnson.

"Men hate more steadily than they love."

"A tavern chair is the throne of human felicity."

"A man in jail has more room, better food, and commonly better company than in a ship."

"No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into jail; for being in a ship is being in jail, with the chance of being drowned."

"No wise man will go to live in the country, unless he has something to do which can better be done in the country. . . . A great city is, to be sure, the school for studying life."

"Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

"Sir, if a man were to go by chance at the same time with Burke under a shed to shun a shower, he would say, 'This is an extraordinary man.' "

On first meeting the celebrated Dr. Johnson, Boswell, recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, had stammeringly admitted that "he did indeed come from Scotland, but he could not help it." "That, Sir," boomed Johnson in reply, "is, I find, what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help."

"You know, Sir, Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came (in making the *Dictionary*) to the word *Renegado*, after telling that it meant 'one who deserts to the enemy, a revolter,' I added, 'Sometimes we say a *Gower.*' Thus it went to the press; but the printer had more wit than I, and struck it out."

"Before dinner men meet with great inequality of understanding; and those who are conscious of their inferiority, have the modesty not to talk. But when they have drunk wine, every man feels himself happy, and loses that modesty, and grows impudent and vociferous; but he is not improved; he is only not sensible of his defects."

"A man of sense and education should meet a suitable companion in a wife. It is a miserable thing when the conversation can only be such as, whether the mutton should be boiled or roasted, and probably a dispute about that."

BOSWELL—"If, Sir, you were shut up in a castle, and a newborn child with you, what would you do?" JOHNSON—"Why, Sir, I should not much like my company."

At one time Boswell ventured to Johnson the opinion that possibly the roughness of his manner had not always been an advantage. "No, Sir," thoughtfully replied the Sage, "I have done more good as I am. Obscenity and impiety have always been repressed in my company."

"What we read with inclination makes a much stronger impression. If we read without inclination half the mind is employed in fixing the attention; so there is but one half to be employed on what we read."

"If a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendship in constant repair."

"If a man begins to read in the middle of a book and feels an inclination to go on, let him not quit it to go to the beginning. He may perhaps not feel again the inclination."

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THE *ESSAY*

PART I

For what publication did Macaulay write this essay? Would the nature of the publication for which it was written have any effect upon the style or construction of the essay? Particularly upon the beginning? What were the "physical, intellectual, and moral peculiarities" which distinguished Johnson? Does the superstition of the "royal touch" seem absurd to us? Have we any superstitions which correspond to this one? What effect did his early education have upon his character and his ability as a writer?

Part II

Is poverty always a blessing in disguise? Did it prove so in Johnson's case? Would his career have been different had he been able to finish his course at Oxford in comparative comfort? Can you imagine the circumstances of the "mutinies against the discipline of the college" in which, according to Macaulay, Johnson played a leading part?

Part III

Is the first sentence in this paragraph the topic sentence? Observe the rapid accumulation of details with which Macaulay elaborates on Johnson's malady. What is the effect which is thus gained? Note the figure of speech with which the paragraph concludes.

Part IV

Why did Mrs. Porter's acceptance of Johnson's addresses do her "little honor"? Is Macaulay quite just to Mrs. Porter? Or to Johnson? Can you picture a scene in Johnson's academy? Would he have made a schoolmaster? What was education like in those days? Was Garrick justified in "mimicking the endearments of this extraordinary pair"? Does Macaulay seem to approve of his doing so?

Part V

Observe the contrasts which Macaulay draws in the first paragraph of this section. Note how he balances one against the other in an arrangement called antithesis. Point out passages in which he has successfully made use of concrete and vivid detail. What is the effect thus gained? Who was the foremost man of letters at the period described by Macaulay? Does he still retain that position of eminence?

Part VI

Note again the effective use of concrete details in the first paragraph of this section. What effect is gained by the repeated use of the same sentence form, as in "Being frequently . . ." and "Being often . . ."? Examine the structure of the sentences which conclude this paragraph. Are they especially effective? Why? Are legislative debates to-day reported without disguise? What has brought about the change? Is Macaulay entirely unprejudiced when he writes about Johnson's prejudices? Can you tell where his political sympathies lay?

PART VII

Why should Johnson publish *London* anonymously? Did Pope usually "join heartily in the applause with which a rival genius was welcomed"? What was his usual attitude? Can you imagine a meeting between Pope and Johnson? What contrasts would there be in appearance, manner of speaking, attitude toward life, etc.? Would they have anything in common? Notice again Macaulay's definiteness in describing Johnson's intimates. Pay particular attention to the form and diction of the sentences describing Savage. What makes them so vivid?

PART VIII

Has the first paragraph of this section a topic sentence? Point it out. Was Chesterfield justified in his refusal to become Johnson's patron? Does Macaulay think so? Or was he at fault merely in first accepting, and then rejecting Johnson's suit? Does Macaulay exaggerate Johnson's peculiarities? Observe the effectiveness of some of his sentences, as "who dressed like a scarecrow and ate like a cormorant." Is there any defect in this style?

PART IX

Why did Garrick and Johnson repel each other? What had they in common? Can you imagine a conversation between them, or between others concerning them? Is acting inferior as an art to writing? Does Macaulay mean to suggest that? Is there any parallel to this situation to-day? Should moving pictures actors and actresses receive as much reward as they do, both in financial return and in popular esteem? Are the best authors compensated in proportion? What should determine the rate of compensation in such cases? What does?

PART X

It will be instructive to compare some of the *Spectator* essays with those written by Johnson for the *Rambler*. Compare and contrast the style, the subjects treated, the personalities of the different authors as revealed in their writings. Was Johnson justified in rejecting the advances of a second patron? What effect has his action had on literature? Is there to-day any institution corresponding to patronage?

Part XI

What had Chesterfield to gain from the dedication of the *Dictionary?* Observe the sturdy independence, and yet perfect restraint, of the famous letter to the Earl of Chesterfield. Why was it important that Johnson should know other Teutonic languages besides English? Could a modern dictionary of the English language be made by one man? What has brought about the change? Do you ever read the dictionary for pleasure? What are some of the "short stories" which a modern dictionary can tell us? Should Johnson have been better paid for his *Dictionary?* Why was he not?

Part XII

Do anachronisms such as Johnson discovered in Shakespeare, or Macaulay mentions in *Rasselas,* necessarily invalidate a piece of literature? Did it interfere with the popularity of the piece when it was first published? Do we now pay more or less attention to such matters? Why? Note the picturesqueness with which Macaulay, as always, describes the true state of affairs in Abyssinia.

Part XIII

Do Macaulay's Whig sympathies reappear in this section? Note the details with which he announces the change of ministry in the latter part of the first paragraph of this section. Was Johnson justified in accepting a pension? Is the custom continued to-day? Do we have anything like it at present? Is it possible to deplore a fault and still retain it, as Johnson did? Was Johnson's belief in the Cock Lane ghost, and the possibility of communication with the dead an evidence of "weakness," as Macaulay alleges? Is the possibility of communication with the spirit world seriously entertained in scientific circles to-day?

Part XIV

Is Macaulay entirely just in his estimate of Johnson's edition of Shakespeare? Or does his fondness for downright statement get the better of him, here as elsewhere? Was Johnson justified in "living upon the fame which he had already won"? Does Macaulay seem to think so? Why should Johnson have published "two or three political tracts"? Did he sacrifice his independence by the acceptance of a pension?

PART XV

Note the vigor and directness of this passage. It will repay study. What is the source of Macaulay's information concerning Johnson's conversational powers? Is there to-day any group comparable to that which formed itself into The Literary Club? Could there be? If you were nominating for membership in such a group the foremost literary figures of the present time, whom would you name? Is there anyone who to-day occupies the position in the literary world held during his life by Johnson?

PART XVI

Is Macaulay entirely just to Boswell in this and other passages? As a general proposition, is it possible for a fool to write a great book? A reading of certain passages from Boswell's *Life* may correct some of the impressions which Macaulay gives. Did Boswell set a new fashion in biography? Is his method followed by modern biographers? Does Boswell's *Life* continue to hold its place as "the most interesting biographical work in the world"?

PART XVII

Does Macaulay seem to dwell unduly upon Johnson's peculiarities and infirmities? Is he entirely just to Mrs. Thrale? What advantages did Johnson derive from his association with the Thrales? What did he contribute in return? What elements in his character are revealed by the picture of his household? Has Macaulay drawn this picture in its true colors? Note carefully the construction of some of the sentences, notably the next to the last in this section. The vigor and variety of sentence construction will repay study.

PART XVIII

What was the important event which interrupted at this time the course of Johnson's life? Why was it important for him? Why does Macaulay describe this adventure as a "courageous" one? Are the observations of travelers in foreign countries usually received favorably by the inhabitants of those countries? Can you cite other instances of the journeys of literary celebrities to foreign countries and the effect of those tours upon their popularity? Has the situation changed to-day? Why?

PART XIX

What was Johnson's feeling with respect to Americans? Upon what was it founded? Why should political history have been distasteful to him? What were his views on government, and how had he arrived at them?

PART XX

What is Macaulay's opinion of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets?* Is his judgment generally concurred in? Is it possible that criticisms which are often "grossly and provokingly unjust" should "well deserve to be studied"? Could this same remark apply to certain criticisms which Macaulay himself has penned? Why was Johnson such a poor business man? Can you cite any other instances of literary men who neglected their own interests?

PART XXI

Does longevity exact a "cruel price"? What does Macaulay mean by the phrase? Is Macaulay justified in terming Mrs. Thrale's love for Piozzi a "degrading passion"? Is he entirely just in his portrait of Mrs. Thrale? Could the change in Mrs. Thrale's manner toward Johnson have been brought about by anything else than her desire to remarry against his wishes? What does this section suggest regarding the position of woman at this period?

PART XXII

Note the abundance of detail with which Macaulay paints the scene of Johnson's deathbed.

PART XXIII

Is Johnson's fame kept alive to-day by Boswell's book? Is the man greater than any of his works?

THE *ESSAY* AS A WHOLE

What is Macaulay's aim in writing this essay? Has he accomplished it? Does he unduly emphasize Johnson's peculiarities, or has he given us a true portrait of the man? Do his estimates of some of Johnson's intimates need to be corrected by the findings of modern scholarship?

Does Macaulay's liking for the picturesque sometimes lead him to make statements which, though this is far from his intention, give the effect of exaggeration? Despite this defect, does the essay as a whole give us a vivid and definite impression of Johnson—the man and the author?

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMPOSITION TOPICS

A Meeting of the Literary Club
A Visit to Johnson's Academy
Dr. Johnson's Household
Dr. Johnson Attends the Play
The Making of a Modern Dictionary
London in Dr. Johnson's Time
Johnson and Boswell
Grub Street Then and Now
"Bozzy"
Johnson at the Thrales
An Evening at the Mitre Tavern
Johnson as a Dictator of Literature To-day

FOR FURTHER ACQUAINTANCE WITH JOHNSON

Life of Johnson	*James Boswell*
(There are several good abridged editions)	
Dr. Johnson (a play)	*A. Edward Newton*
Amenities of Book Collecting	*A. Edward Newton*
A Magnificent Farce	*A. Edward Newton*
Young Boswell	*Chauncey B. Tinker*
Essay on Boswell's Johnson	*Thomas Carlyle*
Dr. Johnson and His Circle	*J. C. Bailey*
Life of Samuel Johnson	*Leslie Stephen*

THE *ESSAY* IN REVIEW

A True–False Test

Directions—Some of the following statements are true; some are not. In order to check your recollection of the *Essay,* write "true" following the numbers of those statements which you believe to be true; and "false" after the numbers of those statements you think untrue; either wholly, or in part. Do this on a sheet of paper; do not mark your book.

1. Johnson has been dead a little more than seventy years.

2. In order to defray his mother's funeral expenses, Johnson wrote *The Vanity of Human Wishes* in the evenings of a week.

3. Johnson's wife died three days after the writing of the last number of the *Rambler*.

4. Johnson's father was an obscure bookseller in Lichfield, England.

5. Johnson never received a degree from Oxford University.

6. The authorities of Pembroke College were amazed at the extent of Johnson's learning.

7. Johnson's Tory sympathies came, not from conviction, but from his early environment.

8. The *Rambler* essays became popular only when they were collected in bound volumes.

9. *The Lives of the Poets* are the best of Johnson's works.

10. Johnson was glad to accept the patronage of Chesterfield for his *Dictionary*.

11. The publication of *London* at once placed Johnson high among the writers of the age.

12. The sting of satire was required to arouse Johnson to the necessity of bringing out his edition of Shakespeare.

13. Johnson hesitated to accept a pension from the government.

14. Never had literature been a less gainful calling than when Johnson took up his residence in London.

15. Johnson went up to London in company with James Boswell, who had been one of the pupils in his Academy.

16. Johnson was admirably equipped to write the biographies of the minor poets.

17. Boswell's book has done for Johnson more than the best of his own books could do.

18. Johnson never replied to his detractors.

19. Burke disputed with Johnson the position of leadership in The Literary Club.

20. Johnson's prejudices find no place in his *Dictionary*.

21. The preparation of the *Dictionary* required nine years.

22. Johnson's peculiarities were the cruel marks left by a life which had been one long struggle with disease and adversity.

23. It was only Boswell's urgings which prompted Johnson to undertake the tour to the Hebrides.

24. Johnson disliked the smoke, the mud, and the street cries of London.

25. Political history was positively distasteful to Johnson.

ENGLAND IN 1685

CHAPTER III OF THE *History of England* *

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

I INTEND, in this chapter, to give a description of the state in which England was at the time when the crown passed from Charles the Second to his brother.[1] Such a description, composed from scanty and dispersed materials, must necessarily be very imperfect. Yet it may perhaps correct some false notions.

If we would study with profit the history of our ancestors, we must be constantly on our guard against that delusion which the well-known names of families, places, and offices naturally produce, and must never forget that the country of which we read was a very different country from that in which we live.[2] Could the England of 1685 be, by some magical process, set before our eyes, we should not know one landscape in a hundred or one building in ten thousand. The country gentleman would not recognize his own fields. The inhabitant of the town would not recognize his own street. Everything has been changed but the great features of nature, and a few massive and durable works of human art. Many thousands of square miles which are now rich corn land and meadow, intersected by green hedgerows, and dotted with villages and pleasant country-seats, would appear as moors overgrown with furze, or fens abandoned to wild ducks. We should see straggling huts built of wood and covered with thatch where we now see manufacturing towns and seaports renowned to the farthest ends of the world. The capital itself would shrink to dimensions not much exceeding those of its present suburb on the south of the Thames. Not less strange to us would be the garb and manners of the people, the furniture and the equipages, the interior of the shops and dwellings. Such a change in the state of a nation seems to be at least as well entitled to the notice of an historian as any change of the dynasty or of the ministry.

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* This chapter has been edited to eliminate a number of Macaulay's allusions no longer familiar to the general reader, and also certain of his observations and comment, the point of which is more or less lost on the present-day reader. Care has been taken not to impair either the picture of England or the style of the author.

[1] BROTHER—James II, the last of the Stuart kings, who came to the throne in 1685.

[2] We Live—Macaulay wrote this *History* in 1848.

THE POPULATION OF ENGLAND

One of the first objects of an inquirer who wishes to form a correct notion of the state of a community at a given time must be to ascertain of how many persons that community then consisted. Unfortunately the population of England in 1685 cannot be ascertained with perfect accuracy. For no great state had then adopted the wise course of periodically numbering the people. All men were left to conjecture for themselves; and, as they generally conjectured without examining facts, and under the influence of strong passions and prejudices, their guesses were often ludicrously absurd. We are not, however, left without the means of correcting the wild blunders into which some minds were hurried by national vanity, and others by a morbid love of paradox. There are extant three computations which seem to be entitled to peculiar attention. They are entirely independent of each other: they proceed on different principles, and yet there is little difference in the results. Of these three estimates, framed without concert by different persons from different sets of materials, the highest does not exceed the lowest by one-twelfth. We may, therefore, with confidence pronounce that when James the Second reigned, England contained between five million and five million five hundred thousand inhabitants. On the very highest supposition she then had less than one-third of her present [1848] population, and less than three times the population which is now collected in her gigantic capital.

THE REVENUES OF THE KINGDOM

Of the taxation we can speak with more confidence and precision than of the population. The revenue of England, under Charles the Second, was small, when compared with the resources which she even then possessed, or with the sums which were raised by the governments of the neighboring countries.

The most important head of receipt was the excise,[1] which, in the last year of the reign of Charles, produced five hundred and eighty-five thousand pounds, clear of all deductions. The net proceeds of the customs amounted in the same year to five hundred and thirty thousand pounds. These burdens did not lie very heavy on the nation. The tax on chimneys,[2] though less productive, raised far louder murmurs. The discontent excited by direct imposts is, indeed, almost always out of proportion to the quantity of money which they bring into the Exchequer[3]; and the tax on chimneys was, even among direct imposts, peculiarly odious; for it could be levied only by means of domiciliary visits, and of such visits the English have always been impatient to a degree which the people of other countries can but faintly conceive. The poorer householders were frequently unable to pay their hearth money to the day. When this happened, their furniture was distrained [4] without mercy; for the tax was farmed [5] and a farmer of taxes is, of all creditors, proverbially the most rapacious. The collectors were loudly accused of performing their unpopular duty with harshness and insolence. It was said that as soon as they appeared at the threshold of a cottage, the children began to wail, and the old women ran to hide their earthenware. Nay, the single bed of a poor family had sometimes been carried away and sold. The net annual receipt from this tax was two hundred thousand pounds.

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[1] Excise—The name given in Great Britain to the inland revenue taxes and duties.

[2] Tax on chimneys—Chimneys were taxed as luxuries.

[3] Exchequer—That is, the public treasury.

When to these great sources of income which have been mentioned we add the royal domains,[6] then far more extensive than at present, the first fruits and tenths,[7] which had not yet been surrendered to the Church, the duchies [8] of Cornwall and Lancaster, the forfeitures and the fines,[9] we shall find that the whole annual revenue of the crown may be fairly estimated at about fourteen hundred thousand pounds. The profits of the post office had been appropriated by parliament to the Duke of York.[10]

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[4] Distrained—That is, taken and sold to pay the tax.

[5] Was farmed—That is, the right to collect the tax was sold to some individual.

[6] The royal domains—That is, the property of the Crown.

[7] First fruits and tenths—Income which before the Reformation had gone to the Church, still collected, but retained by the Crown.

[8] Duchies, etc.—Whose taxes went to the Crown rather than into the Exchequer.

[9] Forfeitures and fines—Feudal dues and penalties still payable to the Crown.

[10] Duke of York—James II was Duke of York before he became king.

THE ARMY AND THE NAVY

The regular army which was kept up in England at the beginning of the year 1685 consisted, all ranks included, of about seven thousand foot and about seventeen hundred cavalry and dragoons. The discipline was lax, and indeed could not be otherwise. The common law of England knew nothing of courts-martial, and made no distinction, in time of peace, between a soldier and any other subject; nor could the government then venture to ask even the most loyal parliament for a mutiny bill.[1] A soldier, therefore, by knocking down his colonel, incurred only the ordinary penalties of assault and battery, and by refusing to obey orders, by sleeping on guard, or by deserting his colors, incurred no legal penalty at all. Military punishments were doubtless inflicted during the reign of Charles the Second; but they were inflicted very sparingly, and in such a manner as not to attract public notice or to produce an appeal to the courts of Westminster Hall. Such an army as has been described was not very likely to enslave five millions of Englishmen. It would indeed have been hardly able to suppress an insurrection in London.

The list of the king's ships looked well. There were nine first rates, fourteen second rates, thirty-nine third rates, and many smaller vessels. The first rates, indeed, were less than the third rates of our time; and the third rates would not now rank as very large frigates. This force, however, if it had been efficient, would in those days have been regarded by the greatest potentate as formidable. But it existed only on paper. When the reign of Charles terminated, his navy had sunk into degradation and decay, such as would be almost incredible if it were not certified to us by the independent and concurring evidence of witnesses whose authority is beyond exception. Most of the ships which were afloat were commanded by men who had not been bred to the sea. This, it is true, was not an abuse introduced by the government of Charles. No state, ancient or modern, had, before that time, made a complete separation between the naval and military services.

But now wise men began to perceive that the rapid improvement, both of the art of war and of the art of navigation, made it necessary to draw a line between two professions which had hitherto been confounded. Either the command of a regiment or the command of a ship was now a matter quite sufficient to occupy the attention of a single mind. In the year 1672 the French government determined to educate young men of good family from a very early age specially for the sea service. But the English government, instead of following this excellent example, not only continued to distribute high naval commands among landsmen, but selected for such commands landsmen who, even on land, could not safely have been put in any important trust. Any lad of noble birth, any dissolute courtier, for whom one of the king's favorites would speak a word, might hope that a ship of the line, and with it the honor of the country and the lives of hundreds of brave men, would be committed to his care. It mattered not that he had never in his life taken a voyage except on the Thames, that he could not keep his feet in a breeze, that he did not know the difference between latitude and longitude. No previous training was thought necessary; or, at most, he was sent to make a short trip in a man-of-war, where he was subjected to no discipline, where he was treated with marked respect, and where he lived in a round of revels and amusements. If, in the intervals of feasting, drinking, and gambling, he succeeded in learning the meaning of a few technical phrases and the names of the points of the compass, he was fully qualified to take charge of a three-decker.

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[1] Mutiny bill—An English statute reënacted annually to regulate army discipline, thereby helping to establish the regular army.

Such was the ordinary character of those who were then called gentlemen seamen. Mingled with them were to be found, happily for our country, naval commanders of a very different description, men whose whole life had been passed on the deep, and who had worked and fought their way from the lowest offices of the forecastle to rank and distinction. One of the most eminent of these officers was Sir Christopher Mings, who entered the service as a cabin boy, who fell fighting bravely against the Dutch, and whom his crew, weeping and vowing vengeance, carried to the grave. It was by such resolute hearts that, in spite of much maladministration, and in spite of the blunders of more courtly admirals, our coasts were protected and the reputation of our flag upheld during many gloomy and perilous years. But to a landsman these tarpaulins, as they were called, seemed a strange and half-savage race. All their knowledge was professional; and their professional knowledge was practical rather than scientific. Off their own element they were as simple as children. Their deportment was uncouth. There was roughness in their very good-nature; and their talk, where it was not made up of nautical phrases, was too commonly made up of oaths and curses. There were gentlemen and there were seamen in the navy of Charles the Second. But the seamen were not gentlemen, and the gentlemen were not seamen.

THE EXPENSES OF THE GOVERNMENT

Of the expense of the civil government only a small portion was defrayed by the crown. The great majority of the functionaries whose business was to administer justice and preserve order either gave their services to the public gratuitously, or were remunerated in a manner which caused no drain on the revenue of the state. The sheriffs, mayors, and aldermen of the towns, the country gentlemen who were in the commission of the peace, the headboroughs, bailiffs, and petty constables, cost the king nothing. The superior courts of law were chiefly supported by fees.

Our relations with foreign courts had been put on the most economical footing. The only diplomatic agent who had the title of ambassador resided at Constantinople, and was partly supported by the Turkey Company.[1] Even at the court of Versailles[2] England had only an envoy; and she had not even an envoy at the Spanish, Swedish, and Danish courts. The whole expense under this head cannot, in the last year of the reign of Charles the Second, have much exceeded twenty thousand pounds.

In this frugality there was nothing laudable. Charles was, as usual, niggardly in the wrong place, and munificent in the wrong place. The public service was starved that courtiers might be pampered. The expense of the navy, of the ordnance, of pensions to needy old officers, of missions to foreign courts, must seem small indeed to the present generation. But the personal favorites of the sovereign, his ministers, and the creatures of those ministers, were gorged with public money. Their salaries and pensions, when compared with the incomes of the nobility, the gentry, the commercial and professional men of that age, were enormous.

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[1] Turkey Company—A trading company.

[2] Court of Versailles—That is, the French Court.

During the last century no prime minister, however powerful, has become rich in office, and several prime ministers have impaired their private fortune in sustaining their public character. In the seventeenth century a statesman who was at the head of affairs might easily, and without giving scandal, accumulate in no long time an estate amply sufficient to support a dukedom. It is probable that the income of the prime minister, during his tenure of power, far exceeded that of any other subject.

THE PUBLIC RESOURCES—AGRICULTURE

The fact that the sum raised in England by taxation has in a time not exceeding two long lives been multiplied thirty-fold is strange, and may at first sight seem appalling. But those who are alarmed by the increase of the public burdens may perhaps be reassured when they have considered the increase of the public resources. In the year 1685 the value of the produce of the soil far exceeded the value of all the other fruits of human industry. Yet agriculture was in what would now be considered as a very rude and imperfect state. The arable land[1] and pasture land were not supposed by the best political arithmeticians of that age to amount to much more than half the area of the kingdom. The remainder was believed to consist of moor, forest, and fen.

Even in those parts of the kingdom which at the close of the reign of Charles the Second were the best cultivated, the farming, though greatly improved since the Civil War,[2] was not such as would now be thought skillful. To this day no effectual steps have been taken by public authority for the purpose of obtaining accurate accounts of the produce of the English soil. The historian must therefore follow, with some misgivings, the guidance of those writers on statistics whose reputation for diligence and fidelity stands highest. At present an average crop of wheat, rye, barley, oats, and beans is supposed considerably to exceed thirty millions of quarters. The crop of wheat would be thought poor if it did not exceed twelve millions of quarters. According to the computation made in the year 1696 by Gregory King, the whole quantity of wheat, rye, barley, oats, and beans then annually grown in the kingdom was somewhat less than ten millions of quarters. The wheat, which was then consumed only by those who were in easy circumstances, he estimated at less than two millions of quarters.

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[1] Arable land—Land fit for cultivation.

The rotation of crops was very imperfectly understood. It was known, indeed, that some vegetables lately introduced into our island, particularly the turnip, afforded excellent nutriment in winter to sheep and oxen; but it was not yet the practice to feed cattle in this manner. It was therefore by no means easy to keep them alive during the season when the grass is scanty. They were killed in great numbers and salted at the beginning of the cold weather; and, during several months, even the gentry tasted scarcely any fresh animal food, except game and river fish, which were consequently much more important articles in housekeeping than at present.

[2] CIVIL WAR—The Puritan revolution.

THE PUBLIC RESOURCES—MINERAL WEALTH

THE increase of vegetable produce, though great, seems small when compared with the increase of our mineral wealth. In 1685 the tin of Cornwall, which had, more than two thousand years before, attracted the Tyrian sails[1] beyond the pillars of

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[1] TYRIAN SAILS—Merchants from the city of Tyre who had sailed to Britain for tin before the time of Christ.

Hercules,[2] was still one of the most valuable subterranean productions of the island. But the veins of copper which lie in the same region were, in the time of Charles the Second, altogether neglected, nor did any land-owner take them into the account in estimating the value of his property. The first bed of rock salt had been discovered not long after the Restoration in Cheshire, but does not appear to have been worked in that age. The salt, which was obtained by a rude process from brine pits, was held in no high estimation. The pans in which the manufacture was carried on exhaled a sulphurous stench; and, when the evaporation was complete, the substance which was left was scarcely fit to be used with food. It was therefore seldom used by the upper and middle classes; and there was a regular and considerable importation from France.

Far more important has been the improvement of our iron works. Such works had long existed in our island, but had not prospered, and had been regarded with no favorable eye by the government and by the public. It was not then the practice to employ coal for smelting the ore; and the rapid consumption of wood excited the alarm of politicians. As early as the reign of Elizabeth there had been loud complaints that whole forests were cut down for the purpose of feeding the furnaces; and the parliament had interfered to prohibit the manufacturers from burning timber. The manufacture consequently languished. At the close of the reign of Charles the Second, great part of the iron which was used in the country was imported from abroad; and the whole quantity cast here annually seems not to have exceeded ten thousand tons. At present the trade is thought to be in a depressed state if less than eight hundred thousand tons are produced in a year.

One mineral, perhaps more important than iron itself, remains to be mentioned. Coal, though very little used in any species of manufacture, was already the ordinary fuel in some districts which were fortunate enough to possess large beds, and in the capital, which could easily be supplied by water carriage.

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[2] Pillars of Hercules—That is, the western end of the Mediterranean.

It seems reasonable to believe that at least one-half of the quantity then extracted from the pits was consumed in London. The consumption of London seemed to the writers of that age enormous, and was often mentioned by them as a proof of the greatness of the imperial city.

While these great changes have been in progress, the rent of land has, as might be expected, been almost constantly rising. In some districts it has multiplied more than tenfold. In some it has not more than doubled. It has probably, on the average, quadrupled.

Of the rent, a large proportion was divided among the country gentlemen, a class of persons whose position and character it is most important that we should clearly understand; for by their influence and by their passions the fate of the nation was, at several important conjunctures, determined.

RURAL LIFE—COUNTRY SQUIRES

We should be much mistaken if we pictured to ourselves the squires of the seventeenth century as men bearing a close resemblance to their descendants, the county members and chairmen of quarter sessions[1] with whom we are familiar. The modern country gentleman generally receives a liberal education, passes from a distinguished school to a distinguished college, and has every opportunity to become an excellent scholar. He has generally seen something of foreign countries. A considerable part of his life has generally been passed in the capital, and the refinements of the capital follow him into the country. There is perhaps no class of dwellings so pleasing as the rural seats of the English gentry. In the parks and pleasure-grounds, nature, dressed yet not disguised by art, wears her most alluring form. In the buildings good sense and good taste combine to produce a happy union of the comfortable and the graceful. The pictures, the musical instruments, the library would in any other country be considered as proving the owner to be an eminently polished and accomplished man. A country gentleman who witnessed the Revolution was probably in receipt of about a fourth part of the rent which his acres now yield to his posterity. He was, therefore, as compared with his posterity, a poor man, and was generally under the necessity of residing, with little interruption, on his estate. To travel on the Continent, to maintain an establishment in London, or even to visit London frequently, were pleasures in which only the great proprietors could indulge. It may be confidently affirmed that of the squires whose names were in King Charles's commissions of peace and lieutenancy not one in twenty went to town once in five years, or had ever in his life wandered so far as Paris. Many lords of manors had received an education differing little from that of their menial servants. The heir of an estate often passed his boyhood and youth at the seat of his family with no better tutors than grooms and gamekeepers, and scarce attained learning enough to sign his name to a mittimus. If he went to school and to college, he generally returned before he was twenty to the seclusion of the old hall, and there, unless his mind were very happily constituted by nature, soon forgot his academical pursuits in rural business and pleasures. His chief serious employment was the care of his property. He examined samples of grain, handled pigs, and on market days made bargains over a tankard with drovers and hop merchants. His chief pleasures were commonly derived from field sports and from an unrefined sensuality. His language and pronunciation were such as we should now expect to hear only from the most ignorant clowns. His oaths, coarse jests, and scurrilous terms of abuse were uttered with the broadest accent of his province. It was easy to discern, from the first words which he spoke, whether he came from Somersetshire or Yorkshire. He troubled himself little about decorating his abode, and, if he attempted decoration, seldom produced anything but deformity. The litter of a farmyard gathered under the windows of his bedchamber, and the cabbages and gooseberry bushes grew close to his hall door. His table was loaded with coarse plenty, and guests were cordially welcomed to it.

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[1] Quarter sessions—Courts which sat quarterly, and were presided over by country gentlemen in their capacity of justices of the peace.

It was very seldom that the country gentleman caught glimpses of the great world, and what he saw of it tended rather to confuse than to enlighten his understanding. His opinions respecting religion, government, foreign countries, and former times, having been derived, not from study, from observation, or from conversation with enlightened companions, but from such traditions as were current in his own small circle, were the opinions of a child. He adhered to them, however, with the obstinacy which is generally found in ignorant men accustomed to be fed with flattery. His animosities were numerous and bitter. He hated Frenchmen and Italians, Scotchmen and Irishmen, Papists and Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, Quakers and Jews. Towards London and Londoners he felt an aversion which more than once produced important political effects. His wife and daughter were in tastes and acquirements below a housekeeper or a stillroom maid of the present day. They stitched and spun, brewed gooseberry wine, cured marigolds,[2] and made the crust for the venison pasty.

From this description it might be supposed that the English squire of the seventeenth century did not materially differ from a rustic miller or alehouse keeper of our time. There are, however, some important parts of his character still to be noted which will greatly modify this estimate. Unlettered as he was and unpolished, he was still in some most important points a gentleman. He was a member of a proud and powerful aristocracy, and was distinguished by many both of the good and of the bad qualities which belong to aristocrats. He knew the genealogies and coats-of-arms of all his neighbors, and could tell which of them had assumed supporters without any right, and which of them were so unfortunate as to be great-grandsons of aldermen.[3] He was a magistrate, and, as such, administered gratuitously to those who dwelt around him a rude patriarchal justice,[4] which, in spite of innumerable blunders and of occasional acts of tyranny, was yet better than no justice at all. He was an officer of the trainbands,[5] and his military dignity, though it might move the mirth of gallants who had served a campaign in Flanders, raised his character in his own eyes, and in the eyes of his neighbors. Thus the character of the English esquire of the seventeenth century was compounded of two elements which we are not accustomed to find united. His ignorance and uncouthness, his low tastes and gross phrases would, in our time, be considered as indicating a nature and a breeding thoroughly plebeian. Yet he was essentially a patrician, and had, in large measure, both the virtues and the vices which flourish among men set from their birth in high place, and accustomed to authority, to observance, and to self-respect.

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[2] CURED MARIGOLDS—Marigolds were used as a dye.

[3] GREAT-GRANDSONS OF ALDERMEN—And hence were the descendants of tradesmen instead of landed gentlemen.

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[4] Patriarchal justice—That is, such as was dealt out by the ancient patriarchal heads of families or clans, like Abraham.

[5] Trainbands—Militia.

THE MANUFACTURING CENTERS

Great as has been the change in the rural life of England since the Revolution, the change which has come to pass in the cities is still more amazing. At present a sixth part of the nation is crowded into provincial towns of more than thirty thousand inhabitants. In the reign of Charles the Second no provincial town in the kingdom contained thirty thousand inhabitants, and only four provincial towns contained so many as ten thousand inhabitants.

Next to the capital, but next at an immense distance, stood Bristol, then the first English seaport, and Norwich, then the first English manufacturing town. Both have since that time been far outstripped by younger rivals; yet both have made great positive advances. The population of Bristol has quadrupled. The population of Norwich has more than doubled.

Far below Norwich, but still high in dignity and importance, were some other ancient capitals of shires. In that age it was seldom that a country gentleman went up with his family to London. The county town was his metropolis. He sometimes made it his residence during part of the year. At all events, he was often attracted thither by business and pleasure, by assizes, quarter sessions, elections, musters of militia, festivals, and races. There were the halls where the judges robed in scarlet and escorted by javelins and trumpets, opened the king's commission twice a year. There were the markets at which the corn, the cattle, the wool, and the hops of the surrounding country were exposed to sale. There were the great fairs to which merchants came down from London, and where the rural dealer laid in his annual stores of sugar, stationery, cutlery, and muslin. There were the shops at which the best families of the neighborhood bought grocery and millinery. Some of these places derived dignity from interesting historical recollections, from cathedrals decorated by all the art and magnificance of the middle ages and from palaces where a long succession of prelates had dwelt.

The population of every one of these places has, since the Revolution, much more than doubled. The population of some has multiplied sevenfold. The streets have been almost entirely rebuilt. Slate has succeeded to thatch and brick to timber. The pavements and the lamps, the display of wealth in the principal shops, and the luxurious neatness of the dwellings occupied by the gentry would, in the seventeenth century, have seemed miraculous. Yet is the relative importance of the old capitals of counties by no means what it was. Younger towns, towns which are rarely or never mentioned in our early history, and which sent no representatives to our early parliaments, have, within the memory of persons still living, grown to a greatness which this generation contemplates with wonder and pride, not unaccompanied by awe and anxiety.

The most eminent of these towns were indeed known in the seventeenth century as respectable seats of industry. Nay, their rapid progress and their vast opulence were then sometimes described in language which seems ludicrous to a man who has seen their present grandeur. One of the most populous and prosperous among them was Manchester. It had been required by the Protector[1] to send one representative to his parliament, and was mentioned by writers of the time of Charles the Second as a busy and opulent place. Cotton had, during half a century, been brought thither from Cyprus and Smyrna,[2] but the manufacture was in its infancy. Whitney[3] had not yet taught how the raw material might be furnished in quantities almost fabulous. Arkwright[4] had not yet taught how it might be worked up with a speed and precision which seem magical. The whole annual import did not, at the end of the seventeenth century, amount to two millions of pounds, a quantity which would not hardly supply the demand of forty-eight hours. That wonderful emporium,[5] which in population and wealth far surpasses capitals so much renowned as Berlin, Madrid, and Lisbon, was then a mean and ill-built market town, containing under six thousand people. It then had not a single press. It now supports a hundred printing establishments. It then had not a single coach. It now supports twenty coachmakers.

Leeds was already the chief seat of the woolen manufactures of Yorkshire, but the elderly inhabitants could still remember the time when the first brick house, then and long after called the Red House, was built. They boasted loudly of their increasing wealth, and of the immense sales of cloth which took place in the open air on the bridge. Hundreds, nay, thousands of pounds had been paid down in the course of one busy market day. The rising importance of Leeds had attracted the notice of successive governments. Charles the First had granted municipal privileges to the town. Oliver[6] had invited it to send one member to the House of Commons. But from the returns of the hearth money[7] it seems certain that the whole population of the borough, an extensive district which contains many hamlets, did not, in the reign of Charles the Second, exceed seven thousand souls. In 1841 there were more than a hundred and fifty thousand.

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[1] THE PROTECTOR—Oliver Cromwell, whose title while at the head of the English government was Lord Protector.

[2] CYPRUS AND SMYRNA—The island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean. Smyrna, a Mediterranean port, then a Turkish city.

[3] WHITNEY—Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin.

[4] ARKWRIGHT—Inventor of the spinning-frame.

[5] EMPORIUM—That is, Manchester.

[6] OLIVER—That is, Oliver Cromwell.

About a day's journey south of Leeds, on the verge of a wild moorland tract, lay an ancient manor, now rich with cultivation, then barren and unenclosed, which was known by the name of Hallamshire. Iron abounded there, and from a very early period, the rude whittles fabricated there had been sold all over the kingdom. But the manufacture appears to have made little progress during the three centuries which followed his time. This languor may perhaps be explained by the fact that the trade was, during almost the whole of this long period, subject to such regulations as the lord and his court-leet[8] thought fit to impose. The more delicate kinds of cutlery were either made in the capital or brought from the Continent. It was not indeed till the reign of George the First that the English surgeons ceased to import from France those exquisitely fine blades which are required for operations on the human frame. Sheffield which now contains a hundred and twenty thousand souls, sends forth its admirable knives, razors, and lancets to the farthest ends of the world.

Birmingham had not been thought of sufficient importance to send a member to Oliver's parliament. Yet the manufacturers of Birmingham were already a busy and thriving race. They boasted that their hardware was highly esteemed, not indeed, as now, at Pekin and Lima, at Bokhara and Timbuctoo, but in London and even as far off as Ireland.

These four chief seats of our great manufactures deserve especial mention. It would be tedious to enumerate all the populous and opulent hives of industry which, a hundred and fifty years ago, were hamlets without a parish church, or desolate moors, inhabited only by grouse and wild deer. Nor has the change been less signal in those outlets by which the products of the English looms and forges are poured forth over the four quarters of the world. At present Liverpool contains about three hundred thousand inhabitants. The shipping registered at her port amounts to between four and five hundred thousand tons. Into her custom-house has been repeatedly paid in one year a sum more than thrice as great as the whole income of the English crown in 1685.

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[7] HEARTH MONEY—That is, the chimney tax.

[8] COURT-LEET—The court-baron, or manor-court.

THE METROPOLIS—LONDON

The position of London, relatively to the other towns of the empire, was, in the time of Charles the Second, far higher than at present. For at present the population of London is little more than six times the population of Manchester or of Liverpool. In the days of Charles the Second the population of London was more than seventeen times the population of Bristol or of Norwich. It may be doubted whether any other instance can be mentioned of a great kingdom in which the first city was more than seventeen times as large as the second. There is reason to believe that, in 1685, London had been, during about half a century, the most populous capital in Europe. The inhabitants, who are now at least nineteen hundred thousand, were then probably a little more than half a million. London had in the world only one commercial rival, now long outstripped, the mighty and opulent Amsterdam.

Of the metropolis, the City, properly so called, was the most important division. At the time of the Restoration it had been built, for the most part, of wood and plaster; the few bricks that were used were ill baked; the booths where goods were exposed to sale projected far into the streets, and were overhung by the upper stories. A few specimens of this architecture may still be seen in those districts which were not reached by the great fire.[1] That fire had, in a few days, covered a space of little less than a square mile with the ruins of eighty-nine churches and of thirteen thousand houses. But the city had risen again with a celerity which had excited the admiration of neighboring countries. Unfortunately, the old lines of the streets had been to a great extent preserved; and those lines, originally traced in an age when even princesses performed their journeys on horseback, were often too narrow to allow wheeled carriages to pass each other with ease, and were therefore ill adapted for the residence of wealthy persons in an age when a coach and six was a fashionable luxury. The style of building was, however, far superior to that of the city which had perished. The ordinary material was brick, of much better quality than had formerly been used.

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[1] GREAT FIRE—The great fire of London in 1668.

We should greatly err if we were to suppose that any of the streets and squares then bore the same aspect as at present. The great majority of the houses, indeed, have, since that time, been wholly or in great part rebuilt. If the most fashionable parts of the capital could be placed before us, such as they then were, we should be disgusted by their squalid appearance and poisoned by their noisome atmosphere. In Covent Garden[2] a filthy and noisy market was held close to the dwellings of the great. Fruit women screamed, carters fought, cabbage stalks and rotten apples accumulated in heaps at the thresholds[3] of the Countess of Berkshire and of the Bishop of Durham. The center of Lincoln's Inn Fields[4] was an open space where the rabble congregated every evening, within a few yards of Cardigan House and Winchester[5] House, to hear mountebanks harangue, to see bears dance, and to set dogs at oxen.

The houses were not numbered. There would indeed have been little advantage in numbering them; for of the coachmen, chairmen, porters, and errand boys of London, a very small portion could read. It was necessary to use marks which the most ignorant could understand. The shops were therefore distinguished by painted signs, which gave a gay and grotesque aspect to the streets. The walk from Charing Cross to Whitechapel[6] lay through an endless succession of Saracen's Heads, Royal Oaks, Blue Bears, and Golden Lambs, which disappeared when they were no longer required for the direction of the common people.

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[2] COVENT GARDEN—Formerly the convent garden of the monks of Westminster.

[3] THRESHOLDS—In front of the residences.

[4] LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS—The largest square in London, named from its proximity to Lincoln's Inn.

[5] CARDIGAN . . . WINCHESTER—Great residences.

[6] CHARING CROSS TO WHITECHAPEL—Across London.

LONDON—AT NIGHT

WHEN the evening closed in, the difficulty and danger of walking about London became serious indeed. The garret windows were opened, and pails were emptied, with little regard to those who were passing below. Falls, bruises, and broken bones were of constant occurrence. For, till the last year of the reign of Charles the Second, most of the streets were left in profound darkness. Thieves and robbers plied their trade with impunity; yet they were hardly so terrible to peaceable citizens as another class of ruffians. It was a favorite amusement of dissolute young gentlemen to swagger by night about the town, breaking windows, upsetting sedans,[1] beating quiet men, and offering rude caresses to pretty women. The machinery for keeping the peace was utterly contemptible. There was an act of Common Council which provided that more than a thousand watchmen should be constantly on the alert in the city, from sunset to sunrise, and that every inhabitant should take his turn of duty. But the act was negligently executed. Few of those who were summoned left their homes; and those few generally found it more agreeable to tipple in alehouses than to pace the streets.

It ought to be noticed that, in the last year of the reign of Charles the Second, began a great change in the police of London,—a change which has perhaps added as much to the happiness of the great body of the people as revolutions of much greater fame. An ingenious projector, named Edward Heming, obtained letters patent conveying to him, for a term of years, the exclusive right of lighting up London. He undertook, for a moderate consideration, to place a light before every tenth door, on moonless nights, from Michaelmas to Lady Day,[2] and from six to twelve of the clock. Those who now see the capital all the year round, from dusk to dawn, blazing with a splendor compared with which the illuminations for La Hogue[3] and Blenheim[4] would have looked pale, may perhaps smile to think of Heming's lanterns, which glimmered feebly before one house in ten during a small part of one night in three. But such was not the feeling of his contemporaries. His scheme was enthusiastically applauded and furiously attacked. The friends of improvement extolled him as the greatest of all the benefactors of his city. What, they asked, were the boasted inventions of Archimedes[5] when compared with the achievement of the man who had turned the nocturnal shades into noonday? In spite of these eloquent eulogies, the cause of darkness was not left undefended. There were fools in that age who opposed the introduction of what was called the new light as strenuously as fools in our age have opposed the introduction of vaccination and railroads, as strenuously as the fools of an age anterior to the dawn of history doubtless opposed the introduction of the plough and of alphabetical writing. Many years after the date of Heming's patent, there were extensive districts in which no lamp was seen.

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[1] SEDANS—The sedan was a closed chair carried by means of poles affixed to the sides.

[2] Michaelmas to Lady Day—September 29 to the day of the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25.

[3] La Hogue—The victory of La Hogue. See Browning's *Hervé Riel* in *PROSE AND POETRY Eleventh Year.*

[4] Blenheim—The battle in which Marlborough defeated the French in 1704.

[5] Archimedes—An ancient Greek scientist.

LONDON—THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT

Each of the two cities[1] which made up the capital of England had its own center of attraction. In the metropolis of commerce the point of convergence was the Exchange; in the metropolis of fashion the Palace. But the Palace did not retain its influence so long as the Exchange. The revolution completely altered the relations between the court and the higher classes of society. It was by degrees discovered that the king, in his individual capacity, had very little to give; that coronets and garters,[2] bishoprics, and embassies, lordships of the treasury, and tellerships of the Exchequer,[3] were really bestowed, not by the king, but by his advisers. Every ambitious and covetous man perceived that he would consult his own interest far better by acquiring the dominion of a Cornish borough,[4] and by rendering good service to the ministry during the critical session, than by becoming the companion or even the minion of this prince. It was therefore in the antechambers, not of George the First and of George the Second, but of Walpole[5] and of Pelham,[6] that the daily crowd of courtiers was to be found. It is also to be remarked that the same revolution which made it impossible that our kings should use the patronage of the state, merely for the purpose of gratifying their personal predilections, gave us several kings[7] unfitted by their education and habits to be gracious and affable hosts. They had been born and bred on the continent. They never felt themselves at home on our island. If they spoke our language they spoke it inelegantly and with effort. Our national character they never fully understood. Our national manners they hardly attempted to acquire. The most important part of their duty they performed better than any ruler who had preceded them, for they governed strictly according to the law; but they could not be the first gentlemen of the realm, the heads of polite society. If ever they unbent, it was in a very small circle, where hardly an English face was to be seen; and they were never so happy as when they could escape for a summer to their native land. They had indeed their ways of reception for our nobility and gentry; but the reception was mere matter of form, and became at last as solemn a ceremony as a funeral.

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[1] Each of two cities—London and Westminster.

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[2] CORONETS AND GARTERS—That is, titles of honor.

[3] TELLERSHIPS OF THE EXCHEQUER—Offices in the Treasury.

[4] DOMINION OF A CORNISH BOROUGH—That is, getting himself elected to Parliament.

[5] WALPOLE—Robert Walpole, the great Whig Prime Minister of England in the early eighteenth century.

[6] PELHAM—Another Prime Minister.

[7] SEVERAL KINGS—Especially George I and George II of the House of Brunswick. See the *Background of Burke's Speech* in this volume.

Not such was the court of Charles the Second. Whitehall, when he dwelt there, was the focus of political intrigue and of fashionable gayety. Half the jobbing and half the flirting of the metropolis went on under his roof. Whoever could make himself agreeable to the prince or could secure the good offices of the mistress might hope to rise in the world without rendering any service to the government, without being even known by sight to any minister of state. This courtier got a frigate, and that a company; a third, the pardon of a rich offender; a fourth, a lease of crown land on easy terms. If the king notified his pleasure that a briefless lawyer should be made a judge or that a libertine baronet should be made a peer, the gravest councillors, after a little murmuring, submitted. Interest, therefore, drew a constant press of suitors to the gates of the palace, and those gates always stood wide. The king kept open house every day, and all day long, for the good society of London, the extreme Whigs only excepted. Hardly any gentleman had any difficulty in making his way to the royal presence.

LONDON—THE COFFEE-HOUSE

The coffee-house must not be omitted. It might indeed, at that time, have been not improperly called a most important political institution. No parliament had sate for years. The municipal council of the city had ceased to speak the sense of the citizens. Public meetings, harangues, resolutions, and the rest of the modern machinery of agitation had not yet come into fashion. Nothing resembling the modern newspaper existed. In such circumstances, the coffee-houses were the chief organs through which the public opinion of the metropolis vented itself. Every man of the upper or middle class went daily to his coffee-house to learn the news and to discuss it. Every coffee-house had one or more orators to whose eloquence the crowd listened with admiration, and who soon became, what the journalists of our own time have been called, a fourth estate of the realm. The court had long seen with uneasiness the growth of this new power in the state. An attempt had been made, during Danby's[1] administration, to close the coffee-houses. But men of all parties missed their usual places of resort so much that there was a universal outcry. The government did not venture, in opposition to a feeling so strong and general, to enforce a regulation of which the legality might well be questioned. Since that time ten years had elapsed, and, during those years, the number and influence of the coffee-houses had been constantly increasing.

[1] Danby—Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, Prime Minister under William and Mary.

THE HIGHWAYS—MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

The chief cause which made the fusion of the different elements of society so imperfect was the extreme difficulty which our ancestors found in passing from place to place. Of all inventions, the alphabet and the printing-press alone excepted, those inventions which abridge distance have done most for the civilization of our species. Every improvement of the means of locomotion benefits mankind morally and intellectually as well as materially, and not only facilitates the interchange of the various productions of nature and art, but tends to remove national and provincial[1] antipathies, and to bind together all the branches of the great human family. In the seventeenth century the inhabitants of London were, for almost every practical purpose, further from Reading than they now are from Edinburgh, and further from Edinburgh than they now are from Vienna.

It was by the highways that both travelers and goods generally passed from place to place. And those highways appear to have been far worse than might have been expected from the degree of wealth and civilization which the nation had even then attained. On the best lines of communication the ruts were deep, the descents precipitous, and the way often such as it was hardly possible to distinguish, in the dusk, from the unenclosed heath and fen which lay on both sides. It was only in fine weather that the whole breadth of the road was available for wheeled vehicles. Often the mud lay deep on the right and the left, and only a narrow track of firm ground rose above the quagmire. At such times obstructions and quarrels were frequent, and the path was sometimes blocked up during a long time by carriers, neither of whom would break the way. It happened almost every day that coaches stuck fast until a team of cattle could be procured from some neighboring farm to tug them out of the slough.

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[1] Provincial—That is, local.

One chief cause of the badness of the roads seems to have been the defective state of the law. Every parish was bound to repair the highways which passed through it. The peasantry were forced to give their gratuitous labor six days in the year. If this was not sufficient hired labor was employed, and the expense was met by a parochial rate.[2] That a route connecting two great towns, which have a large and thriving trade with each other, should be maintained at the cost of the rural population scattered between them is obviously unjust; and this injustice was peculiarly glaring in the case of the great North Road, which traversed very poor and thinly inhabited districts, and joined very rich and populous districts.

The rich commonly traveled in their own carriages, with at least four horses. A coach and six is in our time never seen, except as part of some pageant. The frequent mention, therefore, of such equipages in old books is likely to mislead us. We attribute to magnificence what was really the effect of a very disagreeable necessity. People, in the time of Charles the Second, traveled with six horses, because with a smaller number there was great danger of sticking fast in the mire.

Public carriages had recently been much improved. During the years which immediately followed the Restoration, a diligence ran between London and Oxford in two days. The passengers slept at Beaconsfield. At length, in the spring of 1669, a great and daring innovation was attempted. It was announced that a vehicle, described as the Flying Coach, would perform the whole journey between sunrise and sunset. This spirited undertaking was solemnly considered and sanctioned by the Heads of the University,[3] and appears to have excited the same sort of interest which is excited in our own time by the opening of a new railway. The Vice-Chancellor,[4] by a notice which was affixed in all public places, prescribed the hour and place of departure. The success of the experiment was complete. At six in the morning the carriage began to move from before the ancient front of All Soul's College, and at seven in the evening the adventurous gentlemen who had run the first risk were safely deposited at their inn in London. The emulation of the sister university was moved, and soon a diligence was set up which in one day carried passengers from Cambridge to the capital. At the close of the reign of Charles the Second, flying carriages ran thrice a week from London to all the chief towns. But no stage coach, indeed no stage wagon, appears to have proceeded farther north than York or farther west than Exeter. The ordinary day's journey of a flying coach was about fifty miles in the summer; but in winter, when the ways were bad and the nights long, little more than thirty.

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[2] PAROCHIAL RATE—A parish tax.

In spite of the attractions of the flying coaches, it was still usual for men who enjoyed health and vigor, and who were not encumbered by much baggage, to perform long journeys on horseback. If the traveler wished to move expeditiously he rode post. Fresh saddle horses and guides were to be procured at convenient distances along all the great lines of road. The charge was threepence a mile for each horse and fourpence a stage for the guide. In this manner, when the ways were good, it was possible to travel, for a considerable time, as rapidly as by any conveyance known in England, till vehicles were propelled by steam.

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[3] HEADS OF THE UNIVERSITY—That is, of Oxford.

[4] VICE-CHANCELLOR—That is, of Oxford University.

Whatever might be the way in which a journey was performed, the travelers, unless they were numerous and well armed, ran considerable risk of being stopped and plundered. The mounted highwayman, a marauder known to our generation only from books, was to be found on every main road. The waste tracts which lie on the great routes near London were especially haunted by plunderers of this class.

THE ENGLISH INNS

All the various dangers by which the traveler was beset were greatly increased by darkness. He was therefore commonly desirous of having the shelter of a roof during the night, and such shelter it was not difficult to obtain. From a very early period the inns of England had been renowned. Never was an Englishman more at home than when he took his ease in his inn. Even men of fortune, who might in their own mansions have enjoyed every luxury, were often in the habit of passing their evenings in the parlor of some neighboring house of public entertainment. They seem to have thought that comfort and freedom could in no other place be enjoyed in equal perfection. This feeling continued during many generations to be a national peculiarity. The liberty and jollity of inns long furnished matter to our novelists and dramatists. Johnson[1] declared that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity; and Shenstone[2] gently complained that no private roof, however friendly, gave the wanderer so warm a welcome as that which was to be found at an inn.

Many conveniences, which were unknown at Hampton Court[3] and Whitehall in the seventeenth century, are to be found in our modern hotels. Yet on the whole it is certain that the improvement of our houses of public entertainment has by no means kept pace with the improvement of our roads and of our conveyances. Nor is this strange; for it is evident that, all other circumstances being supposed equal, the inns will be best where the means of locomotion are worst. The quicker the rate of traveling, the less important is it that there should be numerous agreeable resting-places for the traveler. A hundred and sixty years ago, a person who came up to the capital from a remote county generally required twelve or fifteen meals and lodging for five or six nights by the way. If he were a great man, he expected the meals and lodging to be comfortable and even luxurious. At present [1848], we fly from York or Chester to London by the light of a single winter's day. At present, therefore, a traveler seldom interrupts his journey merely for the sake of rest and refreshment. The consequence is that hundreds of excellent inns have fallen into utter decay. In a short time, no good houses of that description will be found, except at places where strangers are likely to be detained by business or pleasure.

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[1] Johnson, etc.—See *Johnson as a Conversationalist* in this volume.

[2] Shenstone—William Shenstone, an English poet.

[3] Hampton Court—A royal residence.

LITERATURE OF THE DAY

It is scarcely necessary to say that there were then no provincial newspapers. Indeed, except in the capital and at the two universities, there was scarcely a printer in the kingdom. The only press in England north of Trent appears to have been at York. It was not only by means of the London *Gazette* that the government undertook to furnish political instruction to the people. That journal contained a scanty supply of news without comment. Another journal, published under the patronage of the court, consisted of comment without news. This paper, called the *Observator,* was edited by an old Tory pamphleteer named Roger Lestrange. Lestrange was by no means deficient in readiness and shrewdness, and his diction, though coarse and disfigured by a mean and flippant jargon which then passed for wit in the greenroom and the tavern, was not without keenness and vigor.

Literature which could be carried by the post bag then formed the greater part of the intellectual nutriment ruminated[1] by the country divines and country justices. The difficulty and expense of conveying large packets from place to place were so great that an extensive work was longer in making its way from Paternoster Row[2] to Lancashire than it now is in reaching Kentucky. So scantily was a rural parsonage then furnished, even with books the most necessary to a theologian, that ten volumes made a large library. The houses of the gentry were not more plentifully supplied. Few knights of the shire had libraries so good as may now perpetually be found in a servant's hall or in the back parlor of a small shopkeeper. No circulating library, no book society then existed even in the capital; but in the capital those students who could not afford to purchase largely had a resource. The shops of the great booksellers, near Saint Paul's Churchyard, were crowded every day and all day long with readers, and a known customer was often permitted to carry a volume home. In the country there was no such accommodation, and every man was under the necessity of buying whatever he wished to read.

As to the lady of the manor and her daughters, their literary stores generally consisted of a prayer book and a receipt book.[3] But in truth they lost little by living in rural seclusion. For even in the highest ranks and in those situations which afforded the greatest facilities for mental improvement, the English women of that generation were decidedly worse educated than they have been at any other time since the Revival of Learning. At an earlier period, they had studied the masterpieces of ancient genius. In the present day, they seldom bestow much attention on the dead languages, but they are familiar with the tongue of Pascal and Molière,[4] with the tongue of Dante and Tasso,[5] with the tongue of Goethe and Schiller[6]; nor is there any purer or more graceful English than that which accomplished women now speak and write. But during the latter part of the seventeenth century, the culture of the female mind seems to have been almost entirely neglected. If a damsel had the least smattering of literature, she was regarded as a prodigy. Ladies highly born, highly bred, and naturally quick-witted were unable to write a line in their mother tongue without solecisms[7] and faults of spelling such as a charity girl would now be ashamed to commit.

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[1] RUMINATED—Chewed upon.

[2] PATERNOSTER ROW—A London street, center of the book trade.

[3] RECEIPT BOOK—The old spelling for recipe book.

[4] TONGUE OF PASCHAL AND MOLIÈRE—That is, French.

[5] TONGUE OF DANTE AND TASSO—That is, Italian.

[6] TONGUE OF GOETHE AND SCHILLER—That is, German.

[7] Solecisms—Errors in grammar.

LANGUAGES OF SOCIETY

Good Latin scholars were numerous. The language of Rome, indeed, had not altogether lost its imperial character, and was still, in many parts of Europe, almost indispensable to a traveler or a negotiator. To speak it well was therefore a much more common accomplishment than in our time; and neither Oxford nor Cambridge lacked poets who, on a great occasion, could lay at the foot of the throne happy imitations of the verses in which Vergil and Ovid[1] had celebrated the greatness of Augustus.

Yet even the Latin was giving way to a younger rival. France united at that time almost every species of ascendency. Her military glory was at the height. She had vanquished mighty coalitions. She had dictated treaties. She had subjugated great cities and provinces. She had forced the Castilian[2] pride to yield her the precedence. She had summoned Italian princes to prostrate themselves at her footstool. Her authority was supreme in all matters of good breeding, from a duel to a minuet. She determined how a gentleman's coat must be cut, how long his peruke[3] must be, whether his heels must be high or low, and whether the lace on his hat must be broad or narrow. In literature she gave law to the world. The fame of her great writers filled Europe. No other country could produce

[1] Vergil and Ovid—Latin poets of the days of the Emperor Augustus.
[2] Castilian—Spanish.
[3] Peruke—A wig.

a tragic poet equal to Racine, a comic poet equal to Molière, a trifler so agreeable as La Fontaine, a rhetorician so skillful as Bossuet. The literary glory of Italy and of Spain had set; that of Germany had not yet dawned. The genius, therefore, of the eminent men who adorned Paris shone forth with a splendor which was set off to full advantage by contrast. French was fast becoming the universal language, the language of fashionable society, the language of diplomacy. At several courts princes and nobles spoke it more accurately and politely than their mother tongue. In our island there was less of this servility than on the Continent. Neither our good nor our bad qualities were those of imitators. Yet even here homage was paid, awkwardly indeed and sullenly, to the literary supremacy of our neighbors. The melodious Tuscan,[4] so familiar to the gallants and ladies of the court of Elizabeth, sank into contempt. A gentleman who quoted Horace or Terence[5] was considered in good company as a pompous pedant. But to garnish his conversation with scraps of French was the best proof which he could give of his parts and attainments.

The recompense which the wits of that age could obtain from the public was so small that they were under the necessity of eking out their incomes by levying contributions on the great. Every rich and good-natured lord was pestered by authors with a mendicancy so importune, and a flattery so abject, as may in our time seem incredible. The patron to whom a work was inscribed was expected to reward the writer with a purse of gold. The fee paid for the dedication of a book was often much larger than the sum which any bookseller would give for the copyright. Books were therefore often printed merely that they might be dedicated. This traffic in praise completed the degradation of the literary character. Adulation pushed to the verge, sometimes of nonsense and sometimes of impiety, was not thought to disgrace a poet. Independence, veracity, self-respect, were things not expected by the world from him.

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[4] MELODIOUS TUSCAN—That is, Italian.

[5] HORACE OR TERENCE—Latin poets.

In truth, he was in morals something between a pandar and a beggar.

SCIENCE AND ART

Chemistry divided, for a time, with wine and love, with the stage and the gaming-table, with the intrigues of a courtier and the intrigues of a demagogue, the attention of the fickle Buckingham.[1] Charles himself had a laboratory at Whitehall, and was far more active and attentive there than at the council board. It was almost necessary to the character of a fine gentleman to have something to say about air-pumps and telescopes; and even fine ladies, now and then, thought it becoming to affect a taste for science, went in coaches and six to visit the Gresham[2] curiosities, and broke forth into cries of delight at finding that a magnet really attracted a needle, and that a microscope really made a fly look as large as a sparrow.

In this, as in every great stir of the human mind, there was doubtless something which might well move a smile. It is the universal law that whatever pursuit, whatever doctrine becomes fashionable shall lose a portion of that dignity which it had possessed while it was confined to a small but earnest minority, and was loved for its own sake alone. There was a strong persuasion that the whole world was full of secrets of high moment to the happiness of man, and that man had, by his Maker, been intrusted with the key which, rightly used, would give access to them. There was at the same time a conviction that in physics it was impossible to arrive at the knowledge of general laws except by the careful observation of particular facts. Deeply impressed with these great truths, the professors of the new philosophy applied themselves to their task, and before a quarter of a century had expired, they had given ample earnest of what has since been achieved. Already a reform of agriculture had been commenced. New vegetables were cultivated. New implements of husbandry were employed. New manures were applied to the soil. Medicine had in England become an experimental and progressive science, and every day made some new advance.

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[1] Buckingham—The Duke of Buckingham, a favorite of Charles II.

[2] Gresham—The Royal Society held its meetings at Gresham College and here might be seen its scientific aparatus.

It is not very easy to explain why the nation which was so far before its neighbors in science should in art have been far behind them all. Yet such was the fact. At the close of the reign of Charles the Second there was not a single English painter or statuary whose name is now remembered. This sterility is somewhat mysterious, for painters and statuaries were by no means a despised or an ill-paid class. Their social position was at least as high as at present. Their gains, when compared with the wealth of the nation and with the remuneration of other descriptions of intellectual labor, were even larger than at present. Indeed, the munificent patronage which was extended to artists drew them to our shores in multitudes.

THE COMMON PEOPLE

It is time that this description of the England which Charles the Second governed should draw to a close. Yet one subject of the highest moment still remains untouched Nothing has as yet been said of the great body of the people, of those who held the ploughs, who tended the oxen, who toiled at the looms of Norwich, and squared the Portland stone for Saint Paul's. Nor can very much be said. The most numerous class is precisely the class respecting which we have the most meagre information. In those times philanthropists did not yet regard it as a sacred duty, nor had demagogues yet found it a lucrative trade, to expatiate on the distress of the laborer. History was too much occupied with courts and camps to spare a line for the hut of the peasant or for the garret of the mechanic. The press now often sends forth in a day a greater quantity of discussion and declamation about the condition of the working man than was published during the twenty-eight years which elapsed between the Restoration and the Revolution. But it would be a great error to infer from the increase of complaint that there has been any increase of misery.

The great criterion of the state of the common people is the amount of their wages; and as four-fifths of the common people were, in the seventeenth century, employed in agriculture, it is especially important to ascertain what were then the wages of agricultural industry. On this subject we have the means of arriving at conclusions sufficiently exact for our purpose.

Sir William Petty,[1] whose mere assertion carries great weight, informs us that a laborer was by no means in the lowest state who received for a day's work fourpence with food or eightpence without food. Four shillings a week, therefore, were, according to Petty's calculation, fair agricultural wages. On the whole, it seems reasonable to conclude that, in the reign of Charles the Second, the ordinary wages of the peasant did not exceed four shillings a week; but that, in some parts of the kingdom, five shillings, six shillings, and during the summer months, even seven shillings were paid. At present a district where a laboring man earns only seven shillings a week is thought to be in a state shocking to humanity. The average is very much higher; and in prosperous counties, the weekly wages of husbandmen amount to twelve, fourteen, and even sixteen shillings.

The remuneration of workmen employed in manufactures has always been higher than that of the tillers of the soil. In the year 1680 a member of the House of Commons remarked that the high wages paid in this country made it impossible for our textures to maintain a competition with the produce of the Indian looms. An English mechanic, he said, instead of slaving like a native of Bengal for a piece of copper, exacted a shilling a day. Other evidence is extant, which proves that a shilling a day was the pay to which the English manufacturer then thought himself entitled, but that he was often forced to work for less. The common people of that age were not in the habit of meeting for public discussion or haranguing or of petitioning parliament. No newspaper pleaded their cause. It was in rude rhyme that their love and hatred, their exultation and their distress found utterance. A great part of their history is to be learned only from their ballads. One of the most remarkable of the popular lays chanted about the streets of Norwich and Leeds in the time of Charles the Second may still be read on the original broadside. It is the vehement and bitter cry of labor against capital. It describes the good old times when every artisan employed in the woolen manufacture lived as well as a farmer. But those times were past. Sixpence a day now was all that could be earned by hard labor at the loom. If the poor complained that they could not live on such a pittance, they were told that they were free to take it or leave it. For so miserable a recompense were the producers of wealth compelled to toil, rising early and lying down late, while the master clothier, eating, sleeping, and idling, became rich by their exertions. A shilling a day, the poet declares, is what the weaver would have if justice were done. We may therefore conclude that, in the generation which preceded the Revolution, a workman employed in the great staple manufacture of England thought himself fairly paid if he gained six shillings a week.

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[1] Sir William Petty—(1623–1687) English statistician and economist, knighted by Charles II.

It seems clear, therefore, that the wages of labor, estimated in money, were, in 1685, not more than half of what they are now; and there were few articles important to the working man of which the price was not, in 1685, more than half of what it now is. Beer was undoubtedly much cheaper in that age than at present. Meat was also cheaper, but was still so dear that there were hundreds of thousands of families who scarcely knew the taste of it. In the cost of wheat there has been very little change. The average price of the quarter, during the last twelve years of Charles the Second, was fifty shillings. Bread, therefore, such as is now given to the inmates of a workhouse, was then seldom seen, even on the trencher of a yeoman or of a shopkeeper. The great majority of the nation lived almost entirely on rye, barley, and oats.

The produce of tropical countries, the produce of the mines, the produce of machinery, was positively dearer than at present. Among the commodities for which the laborer would have had to pay higher in 1685 than his posterity pay in 1848 were sugar, salt, coals, candles, soap, shoes, stockings, and generally all articles of clothing and all articles of bedding. It may be added that the old coats and blankets would have been, not only more costly, but less serviceable than the modern fabrics.

It may well be, in the twentieth century, that the peasant of Dorsetshire may think himself miserably paid with fifteen shillings a week; that the carpenter at Greenwich may receive ten shillings a day; that laboring men may be as little used to dine without meat as they now are to eat rye bread; that medical discoveries may have added several more years to the average length of human life; that numerous comforts and luxuries which are now unknown, or confined to a few, may be within the reach of every diligent and thrifty working man. And yet it may then be the mode to assert that the increase of wealth and the progress of science have benefited the few at the expense of the many, and to talk of the reign of Queen Victoria as the time when England was truly merry England, when all classes were bound together by brotherly sympathy, when the rich did not grind the faces of the poor, and when the poor did not envy the splendor of the rich.

Macaulay's *History of England* as Literature

Macaulay himself says, "[History] should invest with the reality of human flesh and blood beings whom we are too much inclined to consider as personified qualities in an allegory; call up our ancestors before us with all their peculiarities of language, manners, and garb; show us over their houses, seat us at their tables, rummage their old-fashioned wardrobes, explain the uses of their ponderous furniture." This purpose he well carried out in his *History of England*. His gift for clear and vivid writing produced a picture of life and manners during the years covered which makes the work a classic, unsurpassed to-day.

ESSAY · ON · BURNS

THOMAS · CARLYLE

The Auld Brig o'Doon

SECTION V

ESSAY ON BURNS

THOMAS CARLYLE

THE ESSAY
  PARTS I–XVII 455–534
THE LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS 535
THE LIFE OF THOMAS CARLYLE 541
SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THE *Essay* 544
TOPICS FOR WRITTEN COMPOSITION 548
SOME TESTS ON THE *Essay* 549
SELECTED POEMS FROM BURNS 552–578
  THE NATURE OF BURNS'S POETRY 552
  THE POEMS 554–578

Songs:
  O WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST 554
  OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW 555
  THE BANKS O' DOON 555
  AULD LANG SYNE 556
  SWEET AFTON 558
  A RED, RED ROSE 559

Personal Experiences:
  FAREWELL SONG TO THE BANKS OF AYR 560
  HIGHLAND MARY 561

Satirical:
  ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID 562

Descriptive:
  A WINTER NIGHT 565

Patriotic:
  M'PHERSON'S FAREWELL 569
  BANNOCKBURN 570

Nature Poems:
  TO A MOUSE 572
  TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY 574

Philosophical:
  A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT 576

BURNS

THOMAS CARLYLE

I

IN THE modern arrangements of society, it is no uncommon thing that a man of genius must, like Butler,[1] "ask for bread and receive a stone";[2] for, in spite of our grand maxim[3] of supply and demand, it is by no means the highest excellence that men are most forward to recognize. The inventor of a spinning-jenny[4] is pretty sure of his reward in his own day; but the writer of a true poem, like the apostle of a true religion,[5] is nearly as sure of the contrary. We do not know whether it is not an aggravation[6] of the injustice, that there is generally a posthumous[7] retribution. Robert Burns, in the course of Nature, might yet have been living; but his short life was spent in toil and penury; and he died, in the prime of his manhood,[8] miserable and neglected: and yet already a brave mausoleum[9] shines over his dust, and more than one splendid monument has been reared in other places to his fame; the street where he languished in poverty is called by his name; the highest personages[10] in our literature have been proud to appear as his commentators and admirers; and here is the *sixth* narrative of his *Life* that has been given to the world!

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[1] BUTLER—Samuel Butler (1612-1680), was the author of a mock-epic poem something after the manner of *Don Quixote*. The poem, written in witty couplets, ridiculed the Puritans. It greatly pleased Charles II and the court party, but Butler received no more substantial reward than the favor of the King and his latter years were said to have been spent in poverty. Carlyle was probably familiar with the tradition that upon Butler's tomb was the following epitaph:

"The poet's fate is here in emblem shown,
He asked for bread, and he received a stone."

[2] STONE—See *Matthew* vii: 9: "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will ye give him a stone?"

[3] GRAND MAXIM—Carlyle here refers to the economic law of supply and demand. The adjective "grand" is an irony, for Carlyle was out of sympathy with the materialism of his day.

Mr. Lockhart[11] thinks it necessary to apologize[12] for this new attempt on such a subject: but his readers, we believe, will readily acquit him; or, at worst, will censure only the performance of his task, not the choice of it. The character of Burns, indeed, is a theme that cannot easily become either trite or exhausted: and will probably gain rather than lose in its dimensions by the distance to which it is removed by Time. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet; and this is probably true; but the fault is at least as likely to be the valet's as the hero's. For it is certain, that to the vulgar[13] eye few things are wonderful that are not distant. It is difficult for men to believe that the man, the mere man whom they see, may perhaps painfully feel, toiling at their side through the poor jostlings of existence, can be made of finer clay than themselves. Suppose that some dining acquaintance of Sir Thomas Lucy's[14] and neighbor of John-a-Combe's,[15] had snatched an hour or two from the preservation of his game, and written us a Life of Shakespeare! What dissertations should we not have had—not on *Hamlet* and *The Tempest,* but on the wool-trade,[16] and deer-stealing, and the libel and vagrant laws;[17] and how the Poacher became a Player; and how Sir Thomas and Mr. John had Christian bowels,[18] and did not push him to extremities! In like manner, we believe, with respect to Burns, that till the companions of his pilgrimage,[19] the Honorable Excise Commissioners,[20] and the Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt,[21] and the Dumfries Aristocracy,[22] and all the Squires and Earls,[23] equally with the Ayr Writers,[24] and the New and Old Light Clergy,[25] whom he had to do with, shall have become invisible in the darkness of the Past, or visible only by light borrowed from *his* juxtaposition,[26] it will be difficult to measure him by any true standard, or to estimate what he really was and did, in the eighteenth century, for his country and the world. It will be difficult, we say; but still a fair problem for literary historians; and repeated attempts will give us repeated approximations.

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[4] Spinning-jenny—What Carlyle means here is that a man who invents a machine is more likely to receive an immediate pecuniary return than one who writes a poem. As a matter of fact, the illustration which he has chosen, that of Hargreaves who invented the spinning-jenny, is not an apt one, for Hargreaves did not realize much on his patent.

[5] Apostle of a true religion—For example, Saint Paul, who was thrown into prison.

[6] Aggravation—Heightening.

[7] Posthumous—After one's death. "With Burns's death a reaction in popular opinion set in. He was given a military funeral; and a subscription which finally amounted to £1,000 was raised for his family. . . . Scotland, having done little for Burns in his life, was stricken with remorse when he died, and has sought ever since to atone for the neglect by an idolatry of the poet and by a more than charitable view of the man."—W. A. Neilson, *Robert Burns, How to Know Him.*

[8] Prime of his manhood—Burns died at the age of thirty-seven.

[9] A brave mausoleum—Carlyle here refers to a monument erected in Dumfries churchyard shortly after Burns's death. As a matter of fact, the monument which is surmounted by a tin dome, is not a particularly artistic one.

[10] Highest personages—Carlyle here has in mind the biographers of Burns whom he mentions in the following pages.

[11] Lockhart—John Gibson Lockhart, best known for his great *Life of Scott,* whose son-in-law he was. This essay of Carlyle was written originally is a book review of Lockhart's *Life of Burns.* The essay appeared first in No. 96 of the *Edinburgh Review.*

[12] Apologize—Lockhart begins his preface by saying: "Some apology must be deemed necessary for any new attempt to write the *Life of Burns.*"

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[13] VULGAR—Ordinary. The human weakness to which Carlyle here alludes is explained in the following sentence.

[14] SIR THOMAS LUCY—Carlyle refers here to a tradition which first got into print in Rowe's biography of Shakespeare: "He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company; and, amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him, more than once, in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlcote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge the ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him. And . . . is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him, to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London."

[15] JOHN-A-COMBE—Or John Combe. A citizen of Stratford whom tradition says Shakespeare insulted in an imaginary epitaph. As a matter of fact, John Combe seems to have been a friend of the Shakespeares.

[16] WOOL-TRADE—An allusion to the business in which Shakespeare's father was at one time enaged, and in which the poet as a young man assisted him

[17] VAGRANT LAWS—An allusion to the fact that in the days of Elizabeth common players were classed with rogues and idle vagabonds in the vagrancy laws.

[18] BOWELS—Used here in the old sense of indicating the seat of pity, compassion, or kindness.

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[19] PILGRIMAGE—That is, his pilgrimage through life; his life.

[20] HONORABLE EXCISE COMMISSIONERS—Carlyle here lumps together a number of persons with whom Burns had to do. The Excise Commissioners were the officials to whom Burns as an excise officer was responsible and who made an inquiry into Burns's political opinions. See the sketch of Burns's life following the *Essay*.

[21] THE CALEDONIAN HUNT—The Caledonian Hunt, according to Lockhart, was "an association of the most distinguished members of the northern aristocracy." From Edinburgh Burns wrote a friend at Ayr: "I have found a worthy warm friend in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, who introduced me to Lord Glencairn, a man whose worth and brotherly kindness to me I shall remember when time is no more. By his interest it is passed in the Caledonian Hunt, and entered in their books, that they are to take each a copy of the second edition [of Burns's poems] for which they are to pay one guinea." In the same letter Burns says that he has been introduced to a good many of the Noblesse.

[22] DUMFRIES ARISTOCRACY—By this expression Carlyle alludes to the small-town aristocracy of Burns's home village whose favor was withdrawn from Burns because of his sympathies with the French Revolution.

[23] SQUIRES AND EARLS—Here Carlyle sums up all those persons from the squires of Dumfries to men like the Earl of Glencairn in Edinburgh who had patronized Burns and then turned the cold shoulder to him.

[24] AYR WRITERS—"The lawyers of Edinburgh, in whose wider circles Burns figured at his outset. . . . They were members of the landed aristocracy of the country and formed by far the most influential body in the society of Scotland."—Lockhart. To one of these, Robert Aiken, Burns dedicated *The Cottar's Saturday Night*.

[25] NEW AND OLD LIGHT CLERGY—This is a reference to a division over doctrinal matters in the Scotch Church. Burns, being a liberal, sympathized with the New Lights, and satirized the Old Lights, thereby drawing upon him their enmity.

[26] BORROWED FROM HIS JUXTAPOSITION—For example, as the moon borrows light from the sun. "Juxtaposition" means being placed near to, or over against. Carlyle's meaning here is that all these persons whom he has mentioned would not be unheard of had it not been for their association with Burns whom they repudiated. They live now, so to speak, in the reflection of his glory.

His former Biographers have done something, no doubt, but by no means a great deal, to assist us. Dr. Currie[27] and Mr. Walker,[28] the principal of these writers, have both, we think, mistaken one essentially important thing: Their own and the world's true relation to their author, and the style in which it became such men to think and to speak of such a man. Dr. Currie loved the poet truly; more perhaps than he avowed to his readers, or even to himself; yet he everywhere introduces him with a certain patronizing, apologetic air; as if the polite public might think it strange and half unwarrantable that he, a man of science, a scholar and gentleman, should do such honor to a rustic. In all this, however, we readily admit that his fault was not want of love, but weakness of faith; and regret that the first and kindest of all our poet's biographers should not have seen farther, or believed more boldly what he saw. Mr. Walker offends more deeply in the same kind: and both err alike in presenting us with a detached catalogue of his several supposed attributes, virtues and vices, instead of a delineation of the resulting character as a living unity. This, however, is not painting a portrait; but gauging the length and breadth of the several features, and jotting down their dimensions in arithmetical ciphers. Nay it is not so much as that: for we are yet to learn by what arts or instruments the mind *could* be so measured and gauged.

Mr. Lockhart, we are happy to say, has avoided both these errors. He uniformly treats Burns as the high and remarkable man the public voice has now pronounced him to be: and in delineating him, he has avoided the method of separate generalities, and rather sought for characteristic incidents, habits, actions, sayings; in a word, for aspects which exhibit the whole man, as he looked and lived among his fellows. The book accordingly, with all its deficiencies, gives more insight, we think, into the true character of Burns, than any prior biography: though, being written on the very popular and condensed scheme of an article for *Constable's Miscellany*,[29] it has less depth than we could have wished and expected from a writer of such power; and contains rather more, and more multifarious, quotations than belong of right to an original production. Indeed, Mr. Lockhart's own writing is generally so good, so clear, direct and nervous,[30] that we seldom wish to see it making place for another man's. However, the spirit of the work is throughout candid, tolerant and anxiously conciliating; compliments and praises are liberally distributed, on all hands, to great and small; and, as Mr. Morris Birkbeck[31] observes of the society in the backwoods of America, "the courtesies of polite life are never lost sight of for a moment." But there are better things than these in the volume; and we can safely testify, not only that it is easily and pleasantly read a first time, but may even be without difficulty read again.

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[27] Dr. Currie—Dr. James Currie of Liverpool whose "official" biography of Burns yielded about £1,000 for the benefit of Burns's wife and family.

[28] Mr. Walker—Josiah Walker who wrote a biographical sketch of Burns, which was published in the collected edition of Burns's poems in 1811.

Nevertheless, we are far from thinking that the problem of Burns's Biography has yet been adequately solved. We do not allude so much to deficiency of facts or documents—though of these we are still every day receiving some fresh accession—as to the limited and imperfect application of them to the great end of Biography. Our notions upon this subject[32] may perhaps appear extravagant; but if an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and man's life, from his particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did coexisting circumstances modify him from without; how did he modify these from within? With what endeavors and what efficacy rule over them; with what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society? He who should answer these questions, in regard to any individual, would, as we believe, furnish a model of perfection in Biography. Few individuals, indeed, can deserve such a study; and many *lives* will be written, and, for the gratification of innocent curiosity, ought to be written, and read and forgotten, which are not in this sense *biographies*. But Burns, if we mistake not, is one of these few individuals; and such a study, at least with such a result, he has not yet obtained. Our own contributions to it, we are aware, can be but scanty and feeble; but we offer them with good-will, and trust they may meet with acceptance from those they are intended for.

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[29] *Constable's Miscellany*—This was the title of a series of original and reprinted standard works published by Archibald Constable, an Edinburgh publisher. Constable attempted to put out standard books in inexpensive editions. It was a venture similar to that, say, of *Everyman's Library* familiar to us.

[30] NERVOUS—Spirited, vigorous.

[31] MR. MORRIS BIRKBECK—A traveler whose *Notes on a Journey in America* was published in 1818. Carlyle refers, of course, to America as a whole in his expression "the backwoods of America."

[32] OUR NOTIONS UPON THIS SUBJECT, ETC.—This paragraph is often quoted to explain what a good biography should do. Read it carefully.

II

Burns first came upon the world as a prodigy;[1] and was, in that character, entertained by it, in the usual fashion, with loud, vague, tumultuous wonder, speedily subsiding into censure and neglect; till his early and most mournful death again awakened an enthusiasm for him, which, especially as there was now nothing to be done, and much to be spoken, has prolonged itself even to our own time. It is true, the "nine days"[2] have long since elapsed; and the very continuance of this clamor proves that Burns was no vulgar wonder. Accordingly, even in sober judgments, where, as years passed by, he has come to rest more and more exclusively on his own intrinsic merits,[3] and may now be well-nigh shorn of that casual radiance, he appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century. Let it not be objected that he did little. He did much, if we consider where and how. If the work performed was small, we must remember that he had his very materials to discover; for the metal he worked in lay hid under the desert moor,[4] where no eye but his had guessed its existence; and we may almost say, that with his own hand he had to construct the tools for fashioning it. For he found himself in deepest obscurity, without help, without instruction, without model; [5] or with models only of the meanest sort. An educated man stands,[6] as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time; and he works, accordingly, with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is *his* state who stands on the outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed, or remain forever shut against him! His means are the commonest and rudest; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down with a pickaxe; and he must be a Titan [7] that hurls them abroad with his arms.

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[1] Prodigy—An extraordinary thing; a "wonder."

[2] Nine days—An allusion to the expression "nine days' wonder."

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[3] INTRINSIC MERITS—Those peculiarly his own. "Intrinsic" has the meaning of essential or inherent. For example, a ten-dollar bill has no intrinsic value, it is simply a piece of paper; whereas a gold piece has intrinsic value.

[4] THE METAL HE WORKED IN LAY HID UNDER THE DESERT MOOR—An allusion to the fact that Burns's best poetry has to do with a phase of life untouched in literature before Burns; that is, the life of the peasant.

[5] WITHOUT INSTRUCTION, WITHOUT MODEL—Burns, of course, had read a great deal in English and Scotch poetry, but what Carlyle says here is essentially true. "In the annals of English literature, Burns is a kind of anomaly. He defies classification. The preceding English poetry of the eighteenth century did not give any prognostication of the possibility of anyone resembling him. His most characteristic verse is outside its scope, and is quite dissimilar from it in tone, temper and tendency." *Cambridge History of English Literature,* Vol. XI, Chapter x.

[6] AN EDUCATED MAN STANDS, ETC.—Can you illustrate this sentence?

[7] TITAN—In Greek mythology the giants whom Jove enlisted on his side in the war against Saturn. They were so powerful that they hurled mountains and hills at their enemies.

It is in this last shape that Burns presents himself. Born in an age the most prosaic[8] Britain had yet seen, and in a condition the most disadvantageous, where his mind, if it accomplished aught, must accomplish it under the pressure of continual bodily toil, nay of penury and desponding apprehension of the worst evils, and with no furtherance but such knowledge as dwells in a poor man's hut, and the rhymes of a Fergusson or Ramsay[9] for his standard of beauty, he sinks not under all these impediments: through the fogs and darkness of that obscure region, his lynx eye discerns the true relations of the world and human life; he grows into intellectual strength, and trains himself into intellectual expertness. Impelled by the expansive movement of his own irrepressible soul, he struggles forward into the general view; and with haughty modesty lays down before us, as the fruit of his labor, a gift, which Time has now pronounced imperishable. Add to all this, that his darksome drudging childhood and youth was by far the kindliest era of his whole life; and that he died in his thirty-seventh year: and then ask, if it be strange that his poems are imperfect, and of small extent, or that his genius attained no mastery in its art? Alas, his Sun shone as through a tropical tornado; and the pale Shadow of Death eclipsed it at noon[10]! Shrouded in such baleful vapors, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendor, enlightening the world: but some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colors, into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears!

We are anxious not to exaggerate; for it is exposition rather than admiration that our readers require of us here; and yet to avoid some tendency to that side is no easy matter. We love Burns, and we pity him; and love and pity are prone to magnify. Criticism, it is sometimes thought, should be a cold business; we are not so sure of this; but, at all events, our concern with Burns is not exclusively that of critics. True and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us. He was often advised to write a tragedy: time and means were not lent him for this; but through life he enacted a tragedy, and one of the deepest. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene; whether Napoleon himself, left to brawl with Sir Hudson Lowe[11] and perish on his rock,[12] "amid the melancholy main," presented to the reflecting mind such a "spectacle of pity and fear" as did this intrinsically nobler, gentler and perhaps greater soul, wasting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him, till only death opened him an outlet. Conquerors are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathizing loftiness and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection; at best it may excite amazement; and their fall, like that of a pyramid, will be beheld with a certain sadness and awe. But a true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the "Eternal Melodies,"[13] is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

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[8] THE MOST PROSAIC—See *The Story of English Literature* in this volume, Section VIII.

[9] FERGUSSON OR RAMSAY—Robert Fergusson (1750–1774) and Allan Ramsay (1685–1758), two Scotch poets, who no doubt had a great influence upon Burns in turning his attention to the poetry in Scottish life and in influencing him to write in the Scottish dialect. "Rhyme," says Burns, "I had given up [on going to Irvine] but meeting with Fergusson's *Scottish Poems*, I strung anew my wildly sounding lyre with emulating vigor."

[10] AT NOON—Another allusion to Burns's early death.

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[11] Sir Hudson Lowe—During Napoleon's exile on the island of St. Helena, Sir Hudson Lowe was governor of the island and responsible for his great prisoner. Lowe seems to have been a man of petty, vindictive nature, who apparently took a delight in annoying Napoleon. For a good account of the relations between them see Ludwig's *Life of Napoleon.*

[12] Rock—An allusion to the character of the island of St. Helena which is little more than a rock projecting out of the south Atlantic off the coast of Africa. The expression "amid the melancholy main" which is quoted from a poem called *The Castle of Indolence* by James Thomson is an apt description of the remoteness of St. Helena.

[13] Eternal Melodies—This expression is one which Carlyle borrowed from the German in whose literature and philosophy he was deeply read. It illustrates Carlyle's belief that the great realities of life and the things which are of eternal value are not material things but spiritual things. What he means by it can be best illustrated by a quotation from a letter he wrote to Ralph

Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns; but with queenlike indifference she cast it from her hand, like a thing of no moment; and it was defaced and torn asunder, as an idle bauble, before we recognized it. To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny—for so in our ignorance we must speak—his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him; and that spirit, which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning! The "Daisy"[14] falls not unheeded under his plowshare; nor the ruined nest of that "wee, cowering, timorous beastie," cast forth, after all its provident pains, to "thole the sleety dribble and cranreuch cauld."[15] The "hoar visage" of winter delights him; he dwells with a sad and oft-returning fondness in these scenes of solemn desolation; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, for "it raises his thoughts to *Him that walketh on the wings of the wind*."[16] A true Poet-

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Waldo Emerson. "I rejoice," he wrote, "much in the glad serenity with which you look out on this wondrous Dwelling-place of yours and mine—with an ear for the *Ewigen Melodien* [Eternal Melodies], which pipe in the winds around us, and utter themselves forth in all sounds and sights and things: *not* to be written-down by gamut-machinery."

[14] DAISY—From the title of one of Burns's poems. See the Selected Poems following the *Essay*.

[15] WEE, COWERING, TIMOROUS BEASTIE; THOLE THE SLEETY DRIBBLE AND CRANREUCH CAULD—Quoted from To A Mouse. See Selected Poems.

[16] IT RAISES HIS THOUGHTS TO *Him that walketh on the wings of the wind*—See Psalm 104: 1–3: "Bless the Lord, O my soul . . . who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind."

soul, for it needs but to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music! But observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men. What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, boundless love; what generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons[17] of Earth. The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion,[18] but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him: Poverty is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are near and venerable to his heart: and thus over the lowest provinces of man's existence he pours the glory of his own soul; and they rise, in shadow and sunshine, softened and brightened into a beauty which other eyes discern not in the highest. He has a just self-consciousness, which too often degenerates into pride; yet it is a noble pride, for defense, not for offense; no cold suspicious feeling, but a frank and social one. The Peasant Poet bears himself, we might say, like a King in exile: he is cast among the low, and feels himself equal to the highest; yet he claims no rank, that none may be disputed to him. The forward he can repel, the supercilious he can subdue; pretensions of wealth or ancestry are of no avail with him; there is a fire in that dark eye, under which the "insolence of condescension" cannot thrive. In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of Poetry and Manhood. And yet, far as he feels himself above common men, he wanders not apart from them, but mixes warmly in their interests; nay throws himself into their arms, and, as it were, entreats them to love him. It is moving to see how, in his darkest despondency, this proud being still seeks relief from friendship; unbosoms himself, often to the unworthy;

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[17] PARAGON—A model or type of excellence.

[18] ARCADIAN ILLUSION—In the *Ecologues* of Vergil the land of Arcadia is spoken of as a place of rural content and happiness. Arcadia has come to symbolize in English poetry a place of pastoral peace and contentment.

and, amid tears, strains to his glowing heart a heart that knows only the name of friendship. And yet he was "quick to learn"; a man of keen vision, before whom common disguises afforded no concealment. His understanding saw through the hollowness even of accomplished deceivers; but there was a generous credulity in his heart. And so did our Peasant show himself among us; "a soul like an Æolian harp,[19] in whose strings the vulgar wind, as it passed through them, changed itself into articulate melody." And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarrelling with smugglers and vintners, computing excise-dues upon tallow, and gauging ale-barrels! In such toils was that mighty Spirit sorrowfully wasted: and a hundred years may pass on, before another such is given us to waste.

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[19] ÆOLIAN HARP—A kind of musical instrument having strings stretched across the sounding box. The wind, sweeping across the strings, produced musical tones. The harp takes its name from Æolus who in Greek mythology was god of the winds.

III

ALL that remains of Burns, the Writings he has left, seem to us, as we hinted above, no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for completeness: culture, leisure, true effort, nay even length of life. His poems are, with scarcely any exception, mere occasional effusions; poured forth with little premeditation; expressing, by such means as offered, the passion, opinion, or humour of the hour. Never in one instance was it permitted him to grapple with any subject with the full collection of his strength, to fuse and mold it in the concentrated fire of his genius. To try by the strict rules of Art such imperfect fragments, would be at once unprofitable and unfair. Nevertheless, there is something in these poems, marred and defective as they are, which forbids the most fastidious student of poetry to pass them by. Some sort of enduring quality they must have: for after fifty years of the wildest vicissitudes in poetic taste, they still continue to be read; nay, are read more and more eagerly, more and more extensively; and this not only by literary virtuosos, and that class upon whom transitory causes operate most strongly, but by all classes, down to the most hard, unlettered and truly natural class, who read little, and especially no poetry, except because they find pleasure in it. The grounds of so singular and wide a popularity, which extends, in a literal sense, from the palace to the hut, and over all regions where the English tongue is spoken, are well worth inquiring into. After every just deduction, it seems to imply some rare excellence in these works. What is that excellence?

To answer this question will not lead us far. The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognized: his *Sincerity*, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wire-drawn refinings, either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes that he has lived[1] and labored amidst, that he describes: those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can; "in homely rustic jingle"; but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. Horace's rule,

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[1] SCENES THAT HE HAS LIVED, ETC.—Find things to illustrate this statement in the Selected Poems.

Si vis me flere,[2] is applicable in a wider sense than the literal one. To every poet, to every writer, we might say: Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him; but in either case, his words, if they are earnest and sincere, will find some response within us; for in spite of all casual varieties in outward rank or inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.

This may appear a very simple principle, and one which Burns had little merit in discovering. True, the discovery is easy enough: but the practical appliance is not easy; is indeed the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with, and which scarcely one in the hundred ever fairly surmounts. A head too dull to discriminate the true from the false; a heart too dull to love the one at all risks, and to hate the other in spite of all temptations, are alike fatal to a writer. With either, or as more commonly happens, with both of these deficiencies combine a love of distinction, a wish to be original, which is seldom wanting, and we have Affectation,[3] the bane of literature, as Cant,[4] its elder brother, is of morals. How often does the one and the other front us, in poetry, as in life! Great poets themselves are not always free of this vice; nay, it is precisely on a certain sort and degree of greatness that it is most commonly ingrafted. A strong effort after excellence will sometimes solace itself with a mere shadow of success; he who has much to unfold, will sometimes unfold it imperfectly. Byron,[5] for instance, was no common man: yet if we examine his poetry with this view, we shall find it far enough from faultless. Generally speaking, we should say that it is not true. He refreshes us, not with the divine fountain, but too often with vulgar strong waters, stimulating indeed to the taste, but soon ending in dislike, or even nausea. Are his Harolds and Giaours,[6] we would ask, real men; we mean, poetically consistent and conceivable men? Do not these characters, does not the character of their author, which more or less shines through them all, rather appear a thing put on for the occasion; no natural or possible mode of being, but something intended to look much grander than nature? Surely, all these stormful agonies,[7] this volcanic heroism, superhuman contempt and moody desperation, with so much scowling, and teeth-gnashing, and other sulphurous humor, is more like the brawling of a player in some paltry tragedy, which is to last three hours, than the bearing of a man in the business of life, which is to last threescore and ten years. To our minds there is a taint of this sort, something which we should call theatrical, false, affected, in every one of these otherwise so powerful pieces. Perhaps *Don Juan,* especially the latter parts of it, is the only thing approaching to a *sincere* work, he ever wrote; the only work where he showed himself, in any measure, as he was; and seemed so intent on his subject as, for moments, to forget himself. Yet Byron hated this vice; we believe, heartily detested it: nay he had declared formal war against it in words. So difficult is it even for the strongest to make this primary attainment, which might seem the simplest of all: to *read its own consciousness without mistakes,* without errors involuntary or willful! We recollect no poet of Burns's susceptibility who comes before us from the first, and abides with us to the last, with such a total want of affectation. He is an honest man, and an honest writer. In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, he is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no lustre but his own. We reckon this to be a great virtue; to be, in fact, the root of most other virtues, literary as well as moral.

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[2] *Si vis me flere*—The whole quotation is:

Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi.—Ars Poetica of Horace.

Translated, the expression means: If you would have me weep, you yourself must first know what it is to be sorrowful.

[3] AFFECTATION—When a poet or author does not actually feel what he pretends or what he says that he feels, he is said to be guilty of affectation or insincerity.

[4] CANT—The professions of a person who pretends that he believes in high moral principles when in reality he is a hypocrite are called cant.

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[5] BYRON—See the sketch of Byron's life in *PROSE AND POETRY, Tenth Year,* following his poem *The Prisoner of Chillon.*

[6] HAROLDS AND GIAOURS—Characters from Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan.*

[7] STORMFUL AGONIES, ETC.—These expressions describe Byron's emotion in these poems—an emotion which is oftentimes overdrawn and theatrical.

Here, however, let us say, it is to the Poetry of Burns that we now allude; to those writings which he had time to meditate, and where no special reason existed to warp his critical feeling, or obstruct his endeavor to fulfill it. Certain of his Letters, and other fractions of prose composition, by no means deserve this praise. Here, doubtless, there is not the same natural truth of style; but on the contrary, something not only stiff, but strained and twisted; a certain high-flown inflated tone; the stilting emphasis of which contrasts ill with the firmness and rugged simplicity of even his poorest verses. Thus no man, it would appear, is altogether unaffected. Does not Shakespeare himself sometimes premeditate the sheerest bombast![8] But even with regard to these Letters of Burns, it is but fair to state that he had two excuses. The first was his comparative deficiency in language. Burns, though for most part he writes with singular force and even gracefulness, is not master of English prose, as he is of Scottish verse; not master of it, we mean, in proportion to the depth and vehemence of his matter. These Letters strike us as the effort of a man to express something which he has no organ fit for expressing. But a second and weightier excuse is to be found in the peculiarity of Burns's social rank. His correspondents are often men whose relation to him he has never accurately ascertained; whom therefore he is either forearming himself against, or else unconsciously flattering, by adopting the style he thinks will please them. At all events we should remember that these faults, even in his Letters, are not the rule, but the exception. Whenever he writes, as one would ever wish to do, to trusted friends and on real interests, his style becomes simple, vigorous, expressive, sometimes even beautiful. His letters to Mrs. Dunlop[9] are uniformly excellent.

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[8] SHEEREST BOMBAST—See the section following *Macbeth* in this volume, entitled *On the Reading and Study of Macbeth,* Part II "Melodramatic Elements."

[9] Mrs. Dunlop—Mrs. John Dunlop whom Lockhart calls "a lady of high birth and ample fortune, enthusiastically attached to her country, and interested in whatever appeared to concern the honour of Scotland." Her delight at *The Cottar's Saturday Night* led to an extended correspondence with Burns.

IV

But we return to his Poetry. In addition to its Sincerity, it has another peculiar merit, which indeed is but a mode, or perhaps a means, of the foregoing: this displays itself in his choice of subjects; or rather in his indifference as to subjects, and the power he has of making all subjects interesting. The ordinary poet, like the ordinary man, is forever seeking in external circumstances the help which can be found only in himself. In what is familiar and near at hand, he discerns no form or comeliness: home is not poetical but prosaic; it is in some past, distant, conventional heroic world, that poetry resides; were he there and not here, were he thus and not so, it would be well with him. Hence our innumerable host of rose-colored Novels[1] and iron-mailed Epics, with their locality not on the Earth, but somewhere nearer to the Moon. Hence our Virgins of the Sun,[2] and our Knights of the Cross, malicious Saracens in turbans, and copper-colored Chiefs in wampum, and so many other truculent[3] figures from the heroic times or the heroic climates,[4] who on all hands swarm in our poetry. Peace be with them! But yet, as a great moralist proposed preaching to the men of this century, so would we fain preach to the poets, "a sermon on the duty of staying at home." Let them be sure that heroic ages and heroic climates can do little for them. That form of life has attraction for us, less because it is better or nobler than our own, than simply because it is different; and even this attraction must be of the most transient sort. For will not our own age, one day, be an ancient one; and have as quaint a costume as the rest; not contrasted with the rest, therefore, but ranked along with them, in respect of quaintness? Does Homer interest us now, because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece, and two centuries before he was born; or because he wrote what passed in God's world, and in the heart of man, which is the same after thirty centuries? Let our poets look to this: is their feeling really finer, truer, and their vision deeper than that of other men—they have nothing to fear, even from the humblest subject; is it not so—they have nothing to hope, but an ephemeral[5] favor, even from the highest.

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[1] Rose-Colored Novels, etc.—A characteristic comment of Carlyle on the sentimental, highly romantic literature of his time. Carlyle waged unceasing war on sentimentality, sham, cant, and affectation.

[2] Virgins of the Sun—This might be an illusion to Moore's *Lallah Rook*. "Knights of the Cross" and "malicious Saracens in turbans" refer, no doubt, to Sir Walter Scott. "Copper-colored Chiefs in wampum" is probably intended as a fling at James Fenimore Cooper.

[3] Truculent—Fierce.

[4] Heroic times or the heroic climates—By "heroic times" Carlyle possibly had in mind Scott's *Talisman* and his *Ivanhoe*, both of which are laid in the times of the Crusades. By "heroic climates" Carlyle possibly had in

The poet, we imagine, can never have far to seek for a subject: the elements of his art are in him, and around him on every hand; for him the Ideal world[6] is not remote from the Actual, but under it and within it: nay, he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place; for here too is man's existence, with its infinite longings and small acquirings; its ever-thwarted, ever-renewed endeavors; its unspeakable aspirations, its fears and hopes that wander through Eternity; and all the mystery of brightness and of gloom that it was ever made of, in any age or climate, since man first began

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mind Byron whose longer poems which have been mentioned before are laid in the Mediterranean countries. Of course, it is not possible to trace these allusions definitely, but the works mentioned will serve as illustrations.

[5] EPHEMERAL—Short-lived.

[6] THE IDEAL WORLD, etc.—An echo of Plato and of the German philosophy with which Carlyle was familiar.

to live. Is there not the fifth act[7] of a Tragedy in every death-bed, though it were a peasant's, and a bed of heath? And are wooings and weddings obsolete, that there can be Comedy no longer? Or are men suddenly grown wise, that Laughter must no longer shake his sides, but be cheated of his Farce? Man's life and nature is, as it was, and as it will ever be. But the poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them; or they come and pass away before him in vain. He is a *vates*, a seer; a gift of vision has been given him. Has life no meanings for him, which another cannot equally decipher; then he is no poet, and Delphi[8] itself will not make him one.

In this respect, Burns, though not perhaps absolutely a great poet, better manifests his capability, better proves the truth of his genius, than if he had by his own strength kept the whole Minerva Press[9] going, to the end of his literary course. He shows himself at least a poet of Nature's own making; and Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite for the existence of a poet. Sometimes it is a certain sort of training; he must have studied certain things, studied for instance "the elder dramatists," and so learned a poetic language; as if poetry lay in the tongue, not in the heart. At other times we are told he must be bred in a certain rank, and must be on a confidential footing with the higher classes; because, above all things, he must see the world. As to seeing the world, we apprehend this will cause him little difficulty, if he have but eyesight to see it with. Without eyesight, indeed, the task might be hard. The blind or the purblind man "travels from Dan to Beersheba[10] and finds it all barren." But happily every poet is born *in* the world; and sees it, with or against his will, every day and every hour he lives. The mysterious workmanship of man's heart, the true light and the inscrutable[11] darkness of man's destiny, reveal themselves not only in capital cities and crowded saloons, but in every hut and hamlet where men have their abode. Nay, do not the elements of all human virtues and all human vices; the passions at once of a Borgia[12] and of a Luther,[13] lie written, in stronger or fainter lines, in the consciousness of every individual bosom, that has practised honest self-examination? Truly, this same world may be seen in Mossgiel[14] and Tarbolton,[15] if we look well, as clearly as it ever came to light in Crockford's,[16] or the Tuileries[17] itself.

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[7] FIFTH ACT—In the Shakespearean tragedy, the catastrophe takes place in the fifth act.

[8] DELPHI—Perhaps the most famous of the oracles of Greece was that of Apollo at Delphi whither people went to learn of the future.

[9] MINERVA PRESS—A publishing house from which came many of the "rose-colored Novels and iron-mailed Epics" of Carlyle's day.

[10] DAN TO BEERSHEBA—Dan is the city at the extreme north of the Holy Land as Beersheba is the city at the extreme south. The expression has passed into popular expression meaning "from one end of a land to the other."

But sometimes still harder requisitions are laid on the poor aspirant to poetry; for it is hinted that he should have *been born* two centuries ago; inasmuch as poetry, about that date, vanished from the earth, and became no longer attainable by men! Such cobweb speculations have, now and then, overhung the field of literature; but they obstruct not the growth of any plant there: the Shakespeare or the Burns, unconsciously and merely as he walks onward, silently brushes them away. Is not every genius an impossibility till he appear? Why do we call him new and original, if *we* saw where his marble was lying, and what fabric he could rear from it? It is not the material but the workman that is wanting. It is not the dark *place* that hinders, but the dim *eye*. A Scottish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives, till Burns became a poet in it, and a poet of it; found it a *man's* life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battlefields remain unsung; but the *Wounded Hare* [18] has not perished without its memorial; a balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb agonies, because a poet was there. Our *Hallowe'en* had passed and repassed, in rude awe and laughter, since the era of the Druids; [19] but no Theocritus,[20] till Burns, discerned in it the materials of a Scottish Idyl: neither was the *Holy Fair* [21] any *Council of Trent* or Roman *Jubilee;* [22] but nevertheless, *Superstition* and *Hypocrisy* and *Fun* having been propitious to him, in this man's hand it became a poem, instinct with satire and genuine comic life. Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will, and true poetry will not be wanting.

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[11] INSCRUTABLE—Incomprehensible, past finding out.

[12] BORGIA—Cesare Borgia (1476–1507), an Italian whose violence was notorious and whose crimes and wickednesses formed the basis for many lurid tales. "He was a type of the adventurers with which the Italy of the Renaissance swarmed but he was cleverer and more unscrupulous than his rivals." By the expression, "passions . . . of a Borgia" Carlyle means evil passions.

[13] LUTHER—Martin Luther, the chief character in the Reformation movement in Germany seems also to have had a strong temper. By the expression "passions . . . of a Luther," Carlyle means righteous indignation.

[14] MOSSGIEL—A farm in the parish of Mauchline where Burns lived for four years. Lockhart says, "The four years which Burns resided on this cold and ungrateful farm of Mossgiel were the most important of his life. It was then that his genius developed its highest energies."

[15] TARBOLTON—The farm of Lochlea, upon which Burns's father lived for seven years before moving to Mossgiel, was in the parish of Tarbolton in Ayrshire. "Here," says Lockhart, "fortune appeared to smile on his [the father's] industry and frugality. Robert and Gilbert were employed by their father as regular labourers—he allowing them £7 of wages each *per annum.*"

[16] CROCKFORD'S—A kind of gambling club in London, frequented by the fashionable. See Century *Cyclopedia of Names.*

[17] TUILERIES—A royal residence in Paris.

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[18] *Wounded Hare*—A poem written "On Seeing a Wounded Hare Limp by Me, which a Fellow had just Shot at." Enclosing a draft of the poem to Alexander Cunningham, Burns wrote: "You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when all of them have young ones; and it gave me no little gloomy satisfaction to see the poor injured creature escape him."

[19] DRUIDS—Priests of the ancient Britons. It is believed that Hallowe'en customs are a survival of Druidical rites. Burns's poem *Hallowe'en* is descriptive of Scotch Hallowe'en customs among the peasantry. It is said that the custom of lighting Hallowe'en fires survived until recently in the highlands of Scotland and Wales.

[20] THEOCRITUS—A poet of ancient Greece whose *Idylls* describe shepherd life. Some examples of the *Idylls* of Theocritus may be found in translation in *An Anthology of World Poetry* by Mark Van Doren.

[21] *Holy Fair*—A poem of Burns ridiculing the Old Lights. It takes its title from the fact that *Holy Fair* is a common phrase in western Scotland for a celebration of the communion. Burns pretends that one day he was met on the road by three characters, Fun, Superstition, and Hypocrisy, who invited him to go with them to Maulchaine Holy Fair "to spend an hour in daffin."

[22] *Council of Trent* or Roman *Jubilee*—The former was the last great general council of the Roman Church held at Trent in the Tyrol to deal with problems growing out the Reformation. The "Roman Jubilee" is the jubilee of the Roman Church held every twenty-five years. Carlyle's statement here is to the effect that the *Holy Fair* was neither a Council of Trent nor a Roman Jubilee is his way of saying that poetry exists in a religious meeting of Scotch peasants, for him who can see it, as truly as it exists in such imposing things as the Council of Trent and the Roman Jubilee.

V

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling, as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardor of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his "lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit." And observe with what a fierce prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason; some truth to be discovered? No sophistry,[1] no vain surface-logic detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question; and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance; three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness. And, in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward meter, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and yet the burin[2] of a Retzsch[3] is not more expressive or exact.

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[1] Sophistry—Used here in the sense of hollowness or insincerity.

Of this last excellence, the plainest and most comprehensive of all, being indeed the root and foundation of *every* sort of talent, poetical or intellectual, we could produce innumerable instances from the writings of Burns. Take these glimpses of a snowstorm from his *Winter Night* (the italics are ours):

When biting Boreas,[4] fell and doure[5]
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r,
And Phœbus[6] *gies a short-liv'd glow'r*[7]
        Far south the lift,[8]
Dim dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
        Or whirling drift:

'Ae night[9] the storm the steeples, rock'd
Poor labor sweet in sleep was lock'd,
While burns,[10] *wi' snawy wreeths upchok'd,*
        Wild-eddying swirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bock'd[11]
        Down headlong hurl.

Are there not "descriptive touches" here? The describer *saw* this thing; the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it; saw, and not with the eye only. "Poor labor locked in sweet sleep;" the dead stillness of man, unconscious, vanquished, yet not unprotected, while such strife of the material elements rages, and seems to reign supreme in loneliness: this is of the heart as well as of the eye!—Look also at his image of a thaw, and prophesied fall of the *Auld Brig*.[12]

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[2] BURIN—The tool used by an engraver to cut his design on wood or metal.

[3] RETZSCH—Moritz Retzsch, a German painter and etcher. Among his most valued engravings are those illustrating Goethe's *Faust*. He also made illustrations for Schiller and Shakespeare.

[4] BOREAS—In Greek mythology, the north wind.

[5] DOURE—Probably strong or stout, although the commoner meaning is stubborn or sullen.

[6] PHOEBUS—The sun. Phoebus-Apollo was god of the sun in classic mythology.

[7] *Gies a short-liv'd glow'r*—Gives a short-lived glance.

[8] *Far south the lift*—The sky to the south.

[9] 'AE NIGHT—One night.

[10] BURNS—Brooks.

[11] BOCK'D—Gushed.

> When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains
> Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
> When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
> Or stately Lugar's *mossy* fountains *boil*,
> Or where the Greenock winds his *moorland* course,
> Or haunted Garpal[13] draws his feeble source,
> Arous'd by blust'ring winds and *spotting* thowes,[14]
> *In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes;*[15]
> *While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spate,*[16]
> *Sweeps dams and mills and brigs a' to the gate;*[17]
> And from Glenbuck down to the Rattonkey,[18]
> Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd *tumbling* sea;
> Then down ye'll hurl, Deil nor ye never rise!
> *And dash the gumlie jaups*[19] *up to the pouring skies.*

The last line is in itself a Poussin-picture[20] of that Deluge! The welkin[21] has, as it were, bent down with its weight; the "gumlie jaups" and the "pouring skies" are mingled together; it is a world of rain and ruin.—In respect of mere clearness and minute fidelity, the *Farmer's* commendation of his *Auld Mare,*[22] in plow or in cart, may vie with Homer's Smithy of the Cyclops,[23] or yoking of Priam's Chariot.[24] Nor have we forgotten stout *Burn-the-wind*[25] and his brawny customers, inspired by *Scotch Drink:* but it is needless to multiply examples. One other trait of a much finer sort we select from multitudes of such among his *Songs.* It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling the saddest environment and local habitation:

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[12] *Auld Brig*—The quotation comes from one of the speeches of the Auld Brig in Burns's poem, *The Brigs of Ayr,* which is a dialogue between the New Brig and the Auld Brig.

[13] COIL . . . LUGAR . . . GREENOCK . . . GARPAL—Contributory streams. Burns thus explains "haunted Garpal"—"the banks of Garpal water is one of the few places in western Scotland where those fancy-scaring visions, known by the name of Ghaists, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit."

[14] THOWES—Thaws.

[15] *Snaw-broo rowes*—Melted snow rolls down.

[16] *Spate*—Spring torrent.

[17] *A' to the gate*—All away.

[18] GLENBUCK DOWN TO THE RATTONKEY—Glenbuck is the source of the river Ayr. The Rattonkey is a small landing-place above the large quay. "Key" means quay or wharf.

[19] *Gumlie jaups*—Muddy splashes.

[20] POUISSIN—Nicolas Pouissin (1594–1665), a French painter who handled historical and religious themes. One of his greatest creations is a painting called "Winter" or "The Deluge"—"an epic representation, grand and affecting." It is one of a series of four pictures known as the "Four Seasons," painted in 1660–1664 for the Duc de Richelieu. The other pictures are known as "Spring," or "Adam and Eve," "Summer," or "Ruth and Boaz," and "Autumn," or "The Spies."

[21] WELKIN—The sky or heaven.

> *The pale Moon*[26] *is setting beyond the white wave,*
> *And Time is setting wi' me, O;*
> Farewell, false friends! false lover, farewell!
> I'll nae mair trouble them nor thee, O.

This clearness of sight we have called the foundation of all talent; for in fact, unless we *see* our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it, in our understanding, our imagination, our affections? Yet it is not in itself, perhaps, a very high excellence; but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest, or with ordinary power. Homer surpasses all men in this quality: but strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe.[27] It belongs, in truth, to what is called a lively mind; and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases we have mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity;[28] their descriptions are detailed, ample and lovingly exact; Homer's fire bursts through, from time to time, as if by accident; but Defoe and Richardson have no fire. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. Of the strength, the piercing emphasis with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his; words more memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigor and laconic[29] pith? A single phrase depicts a whole subject, a whole scene. We hear of "a gentleman that derived his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God."[30] Our Scottish forefathers in the battle-field struggled forward *"red-wat-shod:"*[31] in this one word a full vision of horror and carnage, perhaps too frightfully accurate for Art!

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[22] *Auld Mare*—The full title of this poem is *The Auld Farmer's New-Year Morning Salutation to his Auld Mare Maggie.*

[23] SMITHY OF THE CYCLOPS—Although Homer relates Odysseus's experience with the Cyclops, Polyphemus, he does not describe the Smithy. This description is to be found in Vergil's *Æneid,* Book VIII.

[24] PRIAM'S CHARIOT—The account is given in Book XXIV of the *Iliad.* The allusion is to the description of the yoking of Priam's chariot before he went to beg the body of Hector from Achilles.

[25] *Burn-the-wind*—The literal meaning of Burnewin, a blacksmith in the poem *Scotch Drink.*

[26] *The pale Moon,* etc.—This stanza comes from the poem generally published under the title *Open the Door to Me, O.* The line generally reads "The *wan* Moon."

[27] RICHARDSON AND DEFOE—Samuel Richardson (1689–1761), author of *Pamela* and *The History of Clarissa Harlowe,* two forerunners of the novel. Daniel Defoe (1661–1731), is best known as the author of *Robinson Crusoe.* Both these men had the gift of writing fictitious narrative so that it conveyed the air of truth. Whoever has read *Robinson Crusoe* will understand what this means.

In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigor of his strictly intellectual perceptions. A resolute force is ever visible in his judgments, and in his feelings and volitions. Professor Stewart[32] says of him, with some surprise: "All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection[33] for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities." But this, if we mistake not, is at all times the very essence of a truly poetical endowment. Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats,[34] where the whole consists in a weak-eyed maudlin sensibility, and a certain vague random tunefulness of nature, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion. The feelings, the gifts that exist in the Poet are those that exist, with more or less development, in every human soul: the imagination, which shudders at the Hell of Dante,[35] is the same faculty, weaker in degree, which called that picture into being. How does the Poet speak to men, with power, but by being still more a man than they? Shakespeare, it has been well observed, in the planning and completing of his tragedies, has shown an Understanding, were it nothing more, which might have governed states, or indited a *Novum Organum*.[36] What Burns's force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging: it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw Philosophy; never rose, except by natural effort and for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication, if no proof sufficient, remains for us in his works: we discern the brawny movements of a gigantic though untutored strength; and can understand how, in conversation, his quick sure insight into men and things may, as much as aught else about him, have amazed the best thinkers of his time and country.

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[28] GARRULITY—That is, wordiness.

[29] LACONIC—Compact, concise.

[30] A GENTLEMAN . . . FROM ALMIGHTY GOD—The subtitle to Burns's *Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson* is *A Gentleman Who Held the Patent for his Honors Immediately from Almighty God.* Burns says of the poem: "It is a tribute to the memory of a man I much loved." The term "patent" is used here in the sense of a grant or title as in the expression "a patent of nobility."

[31] *Red-wat-shod*—From the *Epistle to William Simson,* Schoolmaster at Ochiltree. The lines are:

At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat-shod,
Or glorious died!

The expression means "feet wet with blood."

[32] STEWART—Dugald Stewart, a professor at the University of Edinburgh who knew Burns. This quotation comes from a letter written by Professor Stewart to Dr. Currie.

[33] PREDILECTION—Partiality, liking for.

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[34] KEATS—Carlyle's comment on Keats as well as his references before noted to Scott, Cooper, and Byron constitutes a good example of what we call the irony of circumstance. Carlyle's estimate convicts him of the same fault which he lays at the door of many of Burns's critics, namely that no man is a hero to his own valet.

[35] HELL OF DANTE—Dante, the great poet of medieval Italy, in the first book or *Inferno* of his *Divine Comedy*, describes hell and its torments.

[36] *Novum Organum*—Literally translated, this means *The New Method*. It was written by Sir Francis Bacon, an Elizabethan lawyer and philosopher. It expounds what we have come to call "the scientific method in inquiry."

VI

But, unless we mistake, the intellectual gift of Burns is fine as well as strong. The more delicate relations of things could not well have escaped his eye, for they were intimately present to his heart. The logic of the senate and the forum is indispensable, but not all-sufficient; nay, perhaps the highest Truth is that which will the most certainly elude it.[1] For this logic works by words, and "the highest," it has been said, "cannot be expressed in words." We are not without tokens of an openness for this higher truth also, of a keen though uncultivated sense for it, having existed in Burns. Mr. Stewart, it will be remembered, "wonders," in the passage above quoted, that Burns had formed some distinct conception of the "doctrine of association."[2] We rather think that far subtler things than the doctrine of association had from of old been familiar to him. Here for instance:

"We know nothing,"[3] thus writes he, "or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so we cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favorite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident; or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities: a God that made all things, man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave."

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[1] The highest Truth . . . most certainly elude it—Carlyle here intimates a thing which he firmly believed—that the *Eternal Verities*, or the great truths are things which cannot be proved by logic or in the laboratory. They are things which rest upon intuition. For example, take Emerson's famous lines quoted in *PROSE AND POETRY, Ninth Year:*

Though love repine, and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply,—
" 'T is man's perdition to be safe,
When for the truth he ought to die."

These lines state a great truth but it is not one which can be proved by scientific methods.

[2] Doctrine of association—This is an allusion to a piece of early nineteenth century psychology or moral philosophy. In his *Analysis of the Human Mind,* James Mill, a British economist and philosopher, states the doctrine as follows: "Some ideas are by frequency and strength of association so closely combined that they cannot be separated; if one exists, the other exists along with it in spite of whatever effort we make to disjoin them."

[3] We know nothing, etc.—This paragraph is quoted from a letter to Mrs. Dunlop written New Year's Day morning, 1789.

Force and fineness of understanding are often spoken of as something different from general force and fineness of nature, as something partly independent of them. The necessities of language so require it; but in truth these qualities are not distinct and independent: except in special cases, and from special causes, they ever go together. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character; neither is delicacy in the one kind often divided from delicacy in the other. No one, at all events, is ignorant that in the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling; that his *light* is not more pervading than his *warmth*. He is a man of the most impassioned temper; with passions not strong only, but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. It is reverence, it is love towards all Nature that inspires him, that opens his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise. There is a true old saying, that "Love furthers knowledge:" but above all, it is the living essence of that knowledge which makes poets; the first principle of its existence, increase, activity. Of Burns's fervid affection, his generous all-embracing Love, we have spoken already, as of the grand distinction of his nature, seen equally in word and deed, in his Life and in his Writings. It were easy to multiply examples. Not man only, but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight: "the hoary hawthorn,"[4] the "troop of gray plover," the "solitary curlew," all are dear to him; all live in this Earth along with him, and to all he is knit as in mysterious brotherhood. How touching is it, for instance, that, amidst the gloom of personal misery, brooding over the wintry desolation without him and within him, he thinks of the "ourie cattle" and "silly sheep," and their sufferings in the pitiless storm!

I thought me on the ourie cattle,[5]
Or silly[6] sheep, wha bide this brattle[7]
O' wintry war,
Or thro' the drift, deep-lairing,[8] sprattle,[9]
Beneath a scaur.[10]

Ilk,[11] happing[12] bird, wee helpless thing,
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chittering[13] wing,
And close thy e'e?[14]

The tenant of the mean hut, with its "ragged roof and chinky wall," has a heart to pity even these! This is worth several homilies[15] on Mercy; for it is the voice of Mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all realms of being; nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him. The very Devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy:[16]

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[4] THE HOARY HAWTHORN, etc.—These quotations come from the paragraph just quoted from Burns.

[5] OURIE CATTLE—Shivering, drooping cattle.

[6] SILLY—Helpless.

[7] BRATTLE—The noisy outburst of the storm.

[8] DEEP-LAIRING—Deep-wading and sinking in the snow.

[9] SPRATTLE—Scramble.

[10] SCAUR—A bluff, which gives them shelter.

[11] ILK—Each.

[12] HAPPING—Hopping.

[13] CHITTERING—Shivering.

[14] The concluding stanza to this poem (see *A Winter Night* in Selected Poems) is thought to have suggested the concluding stanza to *The Ancient Mariner*. Compare this with the last stanza of *The Ancient Mariner*. See *PROSE AND POETRY, Ninth Year*.

[15] HOMILIES—A homily is a sermon.

But fare you weel,[17] auld Nickie-ben;[18]
O, wad ye tak a thought and men'!
Ye aiblins[19] might,—I dinna ken,[20]—
    Still hae a stake;[21]
I'm wae[22] to think upo' yon den,
    Even for your sake!

"*He* is the father of curses and lies," said Dr. Slop;[23] "and is cursed and damned already."—"I am sorry for it," quoth my uncle Toby!—a Poet without Love were a physical and metaphysical,[24] impossibility.

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[16] ORTHODOXY—That is, in accordance with the established opinion.

[17] BUT FARE YOU WEEL, etc.—These lines come from the last stanza of Burns's *Address to the Deil.*

[18] NICKIE-BEN—Common Scotch name for "Old Nick" or the devil.

[19] AIBLINS—Perhaps.

[20] I DINNA KEN—I do not know.

[21] STILL HAE A STAKE—Still have a chance.

[22] I'M WAE—I'm sorry.

[23] DR. SLOP—Dr. Slop and uncle Toby are characters in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*. In a letter to Dr. Moore, Burns wrote: "The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and M'Kenzie—*Tristram Shandy* and *The Man of Feeling*—were my bosom favourites."

[24] METAPHYSICAL—Abstract.

VII

BUT has it not been said, in contradiction to this principle, that "Indignation makes verses"?[1] It had been so said, and is true enough: but the contradiction is apparent, not real. The Indignation which makes verses is, properly speaking, an inverted Love; the love of some right, some worth, some goodness, belonging to ourselves or others, which has been injured, and which this tempestuous feeling issues forth to defend and avenge. No selfish fury of heart, existing there as a primary feeling, and without its opposite, ever produced much Poetry: otherwise, we suppose, the Tiger were the most musical of all our choristers. Johnson said he loved a good hater;[2] by which he must mave meant, not so much one that hated violently, as one that hated wisely; hated baseness from love of nobleness. However, in spite of Johnson's paradox,[3] tolerable enough for once in speech, but which need not have been so often adopted in print since then, we rather believe that good men deal sparingly in hatred, either wise or unwise: nay that a "good" hater is still a desideratum in this world.[4] The Devil, at least, who passes for the chief and best of that class, is said to be nowise an amiable character.

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[1] INDIGNATION MAKES VERSES—The Roman poet Juvenal seems to have been the first to say this in his First Satire: *Facit indignatio versum.*

Of the verses which Indignation makes, Burns has also given us specimens: and among the best that were ever given. Who will forget his *"Dweller in yon Dungeon dark";*[5] a piece that might have been chanted by the Furies of Æschylus?[6] The secrets of the infernal Pit are laid bare; a boundless baleful "darkness visible";[7] and streaks of hell-fire quivering madly in its black haggard bosom!

> Dweller in yon Dungeon dark,
> Hangman of Creation, mark!
> Who in widow's weeds appears,
> Laden with unhonored years,
> Noosing with care a bursting purse,
> Baited with many a deadly curse!

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[2] JOHNSON SAID HE LOVED A GOOD HATER—See Macaulay's *Life of Johnson* in this volume. Johnson commenting on a friend said: "Dear Bathhurst was a man to my very heart's content: he hated a fool, and he hated a rogue, and he hated a Whig; he was a very good hater."

[3] PARADOX—An apparent contradiction.

[4] DESIDERATUM IN THIS WORLD—That is, something the world does not have but which it needs, or has a place for.

[5] *Dweller in yon Dungeon dark*—From the *Ode Sacred to the Memory of Mrs. Oswald of Auchencruive.* Burns said of Mrs. Oswald in a letter to Dr. Moore, "You probably knew the lady personally, an honor which I cannot boast; but I spent my early years in her neighborhood, and among her servants and tenants. I know that she was detested with the most heartfelt cordiality." The poem is a scathing comment on Mrs. Oswald.

[6] ÆSCHYLUS—One of the great Greek tragic poets, in whose *Eumenides* the Furies constitute the chorus. The Furies in Greek mythology were the goddesses who punished crime.

[7] DARKNESS VISIBLE—This line comes from Milton's description of hell in Book I of *Paradise Lost.*

Why should we speak of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled;*[8] since all know of it, from the king to the meanest of his subjects? This dithyrambic[9] was composed on horseback; in riding in the middle of tempests, over the wildest Galloway[10] moor, in company with a Mr. Syme,[11] who, observing the poet's looks, forbore to speak,—judiciously enough, for a man composing *Bruce's Address* might be unsafe to trifle with. Doubtless this stern hymn was singing itself, as he formed it, through the soul of Burns: but to the external ear, it should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind. So long as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotchman or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war-ode; the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen.

Another wild stormful Song, that dwells in our ear and mind with a strange tenacity, is *Macpherson's Farewell.*[12] Perhaps there is something in the tradition[13] itself that co-operates. For was not this grim Celt, this shaggy Northland Cacus,[14] that "lived a life of sturt and strife, and died by treacherie,"[15]—was not he too one of the Nimrods[16] and Napoleons of the earth, in the arena of his own remote misty glens, for want of a clearer and wider one? Nay, was there not a touch of grace given him? A fiber of love and softness, of poetry itself, must have lived in his savage heart: for he composed that air the night before his execution; on the wings of that poor melody his better soul would soar away above oblivion, pain and all the ignominy and despair, which, like an avalanche, was hurling him to the abyss! Here, also, as at Thebes and in Pelops' line,[17] was material Fate[18] matched against man's Free-will; matched in bitterest though obscure duel; and the ethereal soul sank not, even in its blindness, without a cry which has survived it. But who, except Burns, could have given words to such a soul; words that we never listen to without a strange half-barbarous, half-poetic fellow-feeling?

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[8] SCOTS WHA HAE WI' WALLACE BLED—The opening line of *Bannockburn, Robert Bruce's Address to His Army.* See Selected Poems.

[9] DITHYRAMBIC—"A wild stormful Song."

[10] GALLOWAY—A district of Scotland.

[11] MR. SYME—John Syme who made a tour with Burns in Galloway. His account is as follows: "I told you that in the midst of the storm on the wilds of Kenmure, Burns was rapt in meditation. What do you think he was about? He was charging the English army along with Bruce at Bannockburn. He was engaged in the same manner on our ride from St. Mary's Isle, and I did not disturb him. Next day he produced me the following address of Bruce to his troops, and gave me a copy for Dalzell."

[12] *Macpherson's Farewell*—On Burns's tour through the Highlands, he heard the legend of Macpherson said to have been a Highland freebooter. "Macpherson was hanged on the Gallow-hill of Banff, on the 16th of November, 1700. He was an excellent performer on the violin and after playing the 'Spring,' as stated in the verses, he offered the instrument which had been his solace in many a gloomy hour, to several of the bystanders, but none having courage to accept of the proffered boon, he dashed it to pieces, that it might perish with himself, and so went singing into eternity. His body afterwards found a resting-place beneath the gallows-tree, on which he paid the forfeit of his life. It is a tradition in Banff that a pardon for Macpherson was on its way to the burgh in time to arrive before noon—the hour fixed for his execution—but that the authorities, anxious to ensure the cateran's death, caused the town-clock to be advanced an hour, so that he was hanged at 11 A.M. instead of 12 noon. Superstitious people are still to be met with, who tell you that Banff clock continues to this day to strike 12 at 11 A.M."

[13] TRADITION—Carlyle may allude to the tradition that the woman who was in love with Macpherson, after his execution led a wandering life and wherever she came sang *Macpherson's Farewell.*

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

Under a lighter disguise, the same principle of Love, which we have recognized as the great characteristic of Burns, and of all true poets, occasionally manifests itself in the shape of Humor.

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[14] CACUS—"Cacus was a huge giant, who inhabited a cave on Mount Aventine, and plundered the surrounding country."—Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable*.

[15] LIVED A LIFE . . . TREACHERIE—This line comes from *Macpherson's Farewell*. "Sturt" means trouble.

[16] NIMROD—See *Genesis* x: 8: "And Cush begat Nimrod, he began to be a mighty one in the earth."

[17] AT THEBES, AND IN PELOPS' LINE—A number of the great Greek tragedies have to do with the old Greek city of Thebes, and with the descendants of Pelops. See Milton's *Il Penseroso*, line 99, and the notes thereunder in this volume.

[18] FATE—In the tragedies of the Greeks the catastrophe seems to be generally the result of Fate or Nemesis rather than the result of acts which proceed from man's own free will as in the Shakespearean drama.

Everywhere, indeed, in his sunny moods, a full buoyant flood of mirth rolls through the mind of Burns; he rises to the high, and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all Nature. We speak not of his bold and often irresistible faculty of caricature; for this is Drollery rather than Humor: but a much tenderer sportfulness dwells in him; and comes forth here and there, in evanescent [19] and beautiful touches; as in his *Address to the Mouse*,[20] or the *Farmer's Mare*, or in his *Elegy on poor Mailie*, which last may be reckoned his happiest effort of this kind. In these pieces there are traits of a Humor as fine as that of Sterne; [21] yet altogether different, original, peculiar—the Humor of Burns.

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[19] EVANESCENT—Fleeting.

[20] *Address to the Mouse*, etc.—See *To a Mouse* in Selected Poems. *Farmer's Mare* has been referred to above. *Elegy on poor Mailie*—The title is *Poor Mailie's Elegy*. Poor Mailie was "a sheep o' sense," about whom Burns wrote another poem entitled *The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie*.

[21] STERNE—See Note 23, Part VI.

VIII

OF THE tenderness, the playful pathos, and many other kindred qualities of Burns's Poetry, much more might be said; but now, with these poor outlines of a sketch, we must prepare to quit this part of our subject. To speak of his individual Writings, adequately and with any detail, would lead us far beyond our limits. As already hinted, we can look on but few of these pieces as, in strict critical language, deserving the name of Poems; they are rhymed eloquence, rhymed pathos, rhymed sense; yet seldom essentially melodious, aerial, poetical. *Tam o' Shanter* [1] itself, which enjoys so high a favor, does not appear to us at all decisively to come under this last category. It is not so much a poem, as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart and

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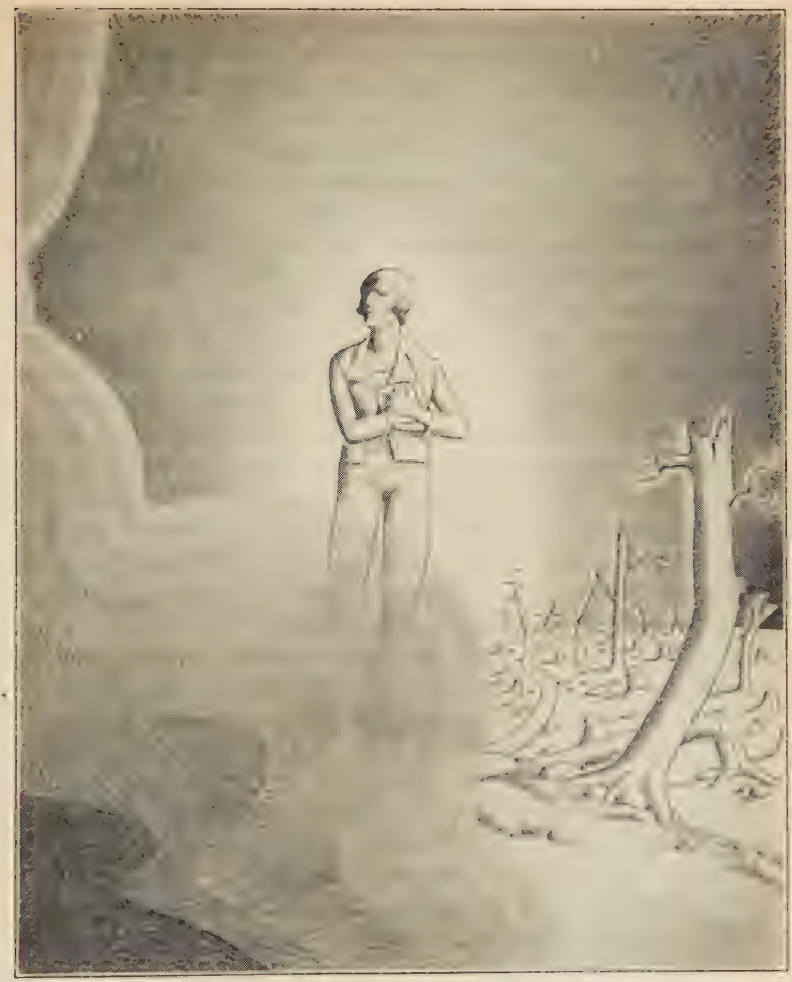
[1] *Tam o' Shanter*—Lockhart says in Chapter VII, "To the last, Burns was of the opinion that *Tam o' Shanter* was the best of his productions; and although it does not often happen that poet and public come to the same conclusion on such points, I believe the decision in question has been all but unanimously approved of."



But, och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

From *To a Mouse*

body of the story still lies hard and dead. He has not gone back, much less carried us back, into that dark, earnest, wondering age, when the tradition was believed, and when it took its rise; he does not attempt, by any new-modeling of his supernatural ware, to strike anew that deep mysterious chord of human nature, which once responded to such things; and which lives in us too, and will forever live, though silent now, or vibrating with far other notes, and to far different issues. Our German readers will understand us, when we say, that he is not the Tieck but the Musäus[2] of this tale. Externally it is all green and living; yet look closer, it is no firm growth, but only ivy on a rock. The piece does not properly cohere: the strange chasm which yawns in our incredulous imaginations between the Ayr public house and the gate of Tophet,[3] is nowhere bridged over, nay the idea of such a bridge is laughed at; and thus the Tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-colored spectrum painted on ale-vapors, and the Farce alone has any reality. We do not say that Burns should have made much more of this tradition; we rather think that, for strictly poetical purposes, not much *was* to be made of it. Neither are we blind to the deep, varied, genial power displayed in what he has actually accomplished; but we find far more "Shakespearean" qualities, as these of *Tam o' Shanter* have been fondly named, in many of his other pieces; nay we incline to believe that this latter might have been written, all but quite as well, by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent.

Perhaps we may venture to say, that the most strictly poetical of all his "poems" is one which does not appear in Currie's Edition; but has been often printed before and since, under the humble title of *The Jolly Beggars*.[4] The subject truly is among the lowest in Nature; but it only the more shows our Poet's gift in raising it into the domain of Art. To our minds, this piece seems thoroughly compacted; melted together, refined; and poured forth in one flood of true *liquid* harmony. It is light, airy, soft of movement; yet sharp and precise in its details; every face is a portrait: that *raucle carlin,*[5] that *wee Apollo,* that *Son of Mars,* are Scottish, yet ideal; the scene is at once a dream, and the very Ragcastle of "Poosie Nansie." Farther, it seems in a considerable degree complete, a real self-supporting Whole, which is the highest merit in a poem. The blanket of the Night is drawn asunder for a moment; in full, ruddy, flaming light, these rough tatterdemalions are seen in their boisterous revel; for the strong pulse of Life vindicates its right to gladness even here; and when the curtain closes, we prolong the action, without effort; the next day as the last, our *Caird,*[6] and our *Balladmonger*[7] are singing and soldiering; their "brats and callets"[8] are hawking, begging, cheating; and some other night, in new combinations, they will wring from Fate another hour of wassail and good cheer. Apart from the universal sympathy with man which this again bespeaks in Burns, a genuine inspiration and no inconsiderable technical talent are manifested here. There is the fidelity, humor, warm life and accurate painting and grouping of some Teniers,[9] for whom hostlers and carousing peasants are not without significance. It would be strange, doubtless, to

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[2] TIECK . . . MUSÄUS—Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853) and Karl August Musäus (1735–1787), German writers. Carlyle who had read both of these writers regarded Tieck far superior to Musäus. His meaning here is, of course, that in *Tam o' Shanter* he thinks Burns not at his best.

[3] TOPHET—Here used to mean hell.

[4] *The Jolly Beggars*—The title of the poem is *The Jolly Beggars: A Cantata*. According to Hunter the poem originated as follows: "One night . . . the poet, in the company of James Smith and Richmond, ventured into

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a very noisy assemblage of vagrants, who were making merry in a 'hedge alehouse,' kept by a Mrs. Gibson, known by the sobriquet of "Poosie" or "Poosie Nancy." After witnessing a little of the rough jollity there, the three young men left; and in the course of a few days, Burns recited a part of the poem to Richmond."

[5] *Raucle carlin,* etc.—Stout old woman. One of the characters in the *Cantata. Wee Apollo*—A character described as "a pigmy scraper wi' his fiddle," called "Apollo" because Apollo was the god of music. *Son of Mars*—A soldier in "auld red rags" who begins his song, "I am a son of Mars."

[6] *Caird*—A traveling tinker, also one of the characters in the *Cantata.*

[7] *Balladmonger*—"A Bard of no regard," also one of the characters in the *Cantata.*

[8] BRATS AND CALLETS—Quoted from the poem, meaning children and trulls.

[9] TENIERS—David Teniers, the Elder, a Flemish painter. "Though he tried his skill in large religious, historical, and mythological compositions, his fame depends chiefly on his paintings of peasants carousing, of festival scenes and the like, which are marked by a healthy sense of humor."

call this the best of Burns's writings: we mean to say only, that it seems to us the most perfect of its kind, as a piece of poetical composition, strictly so called. In the *Beggars' Opera,*[10] in the *Beggars' Bush,*[11] as other critics have already remarked, there is nothing which, in real poetic vigor, equals this *Cantata;* nothing, as we think, which comes within many degrees of it.

[10] *Beggar's Opera*—A parody on the court written by John Gay and first performed in London in 1727. It was an enormous popular success, running for 63 days, having been revived the next season, and performed in all the great English towns. A fully illustrated edition appeared in New York in 1913.

[11] *Beggar's Bush*—A mixed comedy and romance written by John Fletcher, an English dramatist. It was acted at court in 1622.

IX

But by far the most finished, complete and truly inspired pieces of Burns are, without dispute, to be found among his *Songs.* It is here that, although through a small aperture, his light shines with least obstruction; in its highest beauty and pure sunny clearness. The reason may be, that Song is a brief simple species of composition; and requires nothing so much for its perfection as genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart. Yet the Song has its rules equally with the Tragedy; rules which in most cases are poorly fulfilled, in many cases are not so much as felt. We might write a long essay on the Songs of Burns; which we reckon by far the best that Britain has yet produced: for indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know not that, by any other hand, aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. True, we have songs enough "by persons of quality"; we have tawdry, hollow, wine-bred madrigals;[1] many a rhymed speech "in the flowing and watery vein of Osorius[2] the Portugal Bishop," rich in sonorous words, and, for moral, dashed perhaps with some tint of a sentimental sensuality; all which many persons cease not from endeavoring to sing; though for most part, we fear, the music is but from the throat outwards,[3] or at best from some region far enough short of the *Soul;* not in which, but in a certain inane Limbo[4] of the Fancy, or even in some vaporous debatable land on the outskirts of the Nervous System, most of such madrigals and rhymed speeches seem to have originated.

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[1] Madrigal—A light love-lyric, such as Ben Jonson's *Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes.* During the Elizabethan period a number of these madrigals were written by "persons of quality" such as Sir Thomas Wyatt, Sir Walter Ralegh, and many others.

[2] Osorius—His name was Geronymo Osorio, a learned Portuguese divine, sometimes called "the Cicero of Portugal," who lived in the sixteenth century. Carlyle is loosely quoting Bacon who says of Osorius in his *Advancement of Learning,* "his vein was weak and waterish."

With the Songs of Burns we must not name these things. Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades *his* poetry, his Songs are honest in another point of view: in form, as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of Harmony, as Venus rose[5] from the bosom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested; not *said,* or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence; but *sung,* in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings* not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song; and that no songs since the little careless catches, and as it were drops of song, which Shakepeare has here and there sprinkled over his Plays,[6] fulfill this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. Such grace and truth of external movements, too, presupposes in general a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The Songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings, yet with what vehemence and entireness! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or sliest mirth; and yet he is sweet and soft, "sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear." If we further take into account the immense variety of his subjects; how, from the loud flowing revel in *Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut*,[7] to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness for *Mary in Heaven;*[8] from the glad kind greeting of *Auld Lang Syne*,[9] or the comic archness of *Duncan Gray*,[10] to the fire-eyed fury of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart—it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our Song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

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[3] MUSIC IS FROM THE THROAT OUTWARDS, etc.—What Carlyle means here is that in these madrigals to which he has referred, the feeling does not seem sincere. For example, read Ben Johnson's lyric referred to above and compare it with Burns's *To Mary in Heaven.* Which seems to you to be the more sincere?

[4] LIMBO—A region supposed by some of the scholastic theologians to lie on the edge or confines of hell.

[5] AS VENUS ROSE—An allusion to the myth that Venus rose from the foam of the sea.

[6] SHAKESPEARE . . . HIS PLAYS—What lyrics do you remember from Shákespeare's plays? Compare one of them with Burns's *To Mary in Heaven* for sincerity.

It is on his Songs, as we believe, that Burns's chief influence as an author will ultimately be found to depend: nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism[11] is true, shall we account this a small influence. "Let me make the songs of a people," said he, "and you shall make its laws." Surely, if ever any Poet might have equaled himself with Legislators on this ground, it was Burns. His Songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only but of Britain, and of the millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-colored joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men, as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

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[7] *Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut*—A poem celebrating a convivial meeting with two of Burns's friends.

[8] *Mary in Heaven*—A poem arising from Burns's grief at the death of Mary Campbell, the "Highland Mary" of his poems.

[9] *Auld Lang Syne*—See Selected Poems.

[10] *Duncan Gray*—A humorous ballad of Duncan Gray's wooing.

[11] Aphorism—A brief, compact statement. Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun who wrote: "I knew a very wise man who believed that, if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."

X

In another point of view, moreover, we incline to think that Burns's influence may have been considerable: we mean, as exerted specially on the Literature of his country, at least on the Literature of Scotland. Among the great changes which British, particularly Scottish literature, has undergone since that period, one of the greatest will be found to consist in its remarkable increase of nationality. Even the English writers, most popular in Burns's time, were little distinguished for their literary patriotism, in this its best sense. A certain attenuated cosmopolitanism had, in good measure, taken place of the old insular home-feeling; literature was, as it were, without any local environment; was not nourished by the affections which spring from a native soil. Our Grays [1] and Glovers [2] seemed to write almost as if *in vacuo*,[3] the thing written bears no mark of place; it is not written so much for Englishmen, as for men; or rather, which is the inevitable result of this, for certain Generalizations which philosophy termed men. Goldsmith [4] is an exception: not so Johnson; the scene of his *Rambler* is little more English than that of his *Rasselas*.[5]

But if such was, in some degree, the case with England, it was, in the highest degree, the case with Scotland. In fact, our Scottish literature had, at that period, a very singular aspect; unexampled, so far as we know, except perhaps at Geneva, where the same state of matters appears still to continue. For a long period after Scotland became British,[6] we had no literature: at the date when Addison and Steele [7] were writing their *Spectators*, our good Thomas Boston [8] was writing, with the noblest intent, but alike in defiance of grammar and philosophy, his *Fourfold State of Man*. Then came the schisms in our National Church,[9] and the fiercer schisms in our Body Politic [10]: Theologic ink, and Jacobite blood [11] with gall enough in both cases, seemed to have blotted out the intellect of the country: however, it was only obscured, not obliterated. Lord Kames [12] made nearly the first attempt at writing English; and ere long, Hume, Robertson, Smith, and a whole host of followers, attracted hither the eyes of all Europe. And yet in this brilliant resuscitation of our "fervid genius," there was nothing truly Scottish, nothing indigenous; [13] except, perhaps, the natural impetuosity of intellect, which we sometimes claim and are sometimes upbraided with, as a characteristic of our nation. It is curious to remark that Scotland, so full of writers, had no Scottish culture, nor indeed any English; our culture was almost exclusively French. It was by studying Racine[14] and Voltaire, Batteux and Boileau, that Kames had trained himself to be a critic and philosopher; it was the light of Montesquieu and Mably that guided Robertson in his political speculations; Quesnay's lamp that kindled the lamp of Adam Smith. Hume was too rich a man to borrow; and perhaps he reacted on the French more than he was acted on by them: but neither had he aught to do with Scotland; Edinburgh, equally with La Flèche,[15] was but the lodging and laboratory, in which he not so much morally *lived,* as metaphysically *investigated.* Never, perhaps, was there a class of writers so clear and well ordered, yet so totally destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay of any human affection whatever. The French wits of the period were as unpatriotic: but their general deficiency in moral principles, not to say their avowed sensuality and unbelief in all virtue, strictly so called, render this accountable enough. We hope there is a patriotism founded on something better than prejudice; that our country may be dear to us, without injury to our philosophy; that in loving and justly prizing all other lands, we may prize justly, and yet love before all others, our own stern Motherland, and the venerable Structure of social and moral Life, which Mind has through long ages been building up for us there. Surely there is nourishment for the better part of man's heart in all this: surely the roots, that have fixed themselves in the very core of man's being, may be so cultivated as to grow up not into briers, but into roses, in the field of his life! Our Scottish sages have no such propensities: the field of their life shows neither briers nor roses; but only a flat, continuous thrashing-floor for Logic, whereon all questions, from the "Doctrine of Rent"[16] to the

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[1] Grays—Thomas Gray, author of *An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,* see *PROSE AND POETRY, Tenth Year.* Is Carlyle's comment on Gray's *Elegy* justified?

[2] Glovers—Richard Glover, another poet of the same period. See Burke's *Speech* in this volume, Unit II, Note 7. Glover's *Leonidas* was a very popular epic poem in its day.

[3] *In vacuo*—In empty space, in a vacuum.

[4] Goldsmith—Oliver Goldsmith. Can you tell how *The Deserted Village* illustrates this statement? See *PROSE AND POETRY, Tenth Year.*

[5] *Rambler . . . Rasselas*—See the *Life of Samuel Johnson* in this volume.

[6] Scotland became British—Scotland became British by the Act of Union in 1707. See Burke's *Speech,* Unit II, Note 27 in this volume.

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[7] ADDISON AND STEELE—Joseph Addison (1672–1719) and Richard Steele (1671–1729), authors of the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers* and the *Spectator*. The point which Carlyle employs here is that these writings of Addison and Steele did not have to do with generalizations. They were essays on the manners and customs of the day.

[8] THOMAS BOSTON—A Scottish Presbyterian clergyman and religious writer. Carlyle's point is that Boston's work was not written with respect to any local environment.

[9] SCHISMS IN OUR NATIONAL CHURCH—Schisms means divisions or factions. Carlyle here refers to the disagreements of the Auld Light and the New Light Clergy.

[10] SCHISMS IN OUR BODY POLITIC—A reference to the political factions of the day. Adherents of the dethroned James II and his descendants were numerous in Scotland, and were called Jacobites. Burns's own Jacobite sentiments were sometimes expressed to his disadvantage and even danger.

[11] THEOLOGIC INK AND JACOBITE BLOOD—What Carlyle means is this: That the energy and attention which might have gone into the service of literature were consumed in theological and political controversies.

[12] LORD KAMES, etc.—Lord Kames, author of *Elements of Criticism;* David Hume, a Scotch philosopher and historical writer, whose chief work is an *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding;* William Robertson, an historian, best known for his *History of the Emperor Charles V;* Adam Smith, economic writer, author of *The Wealth of Nations*. The titles of these works will serve to show that there was nothing truly Scottish about their writings.

[13] INDIGENOUS—Native, that is, peculiarly Scottish.

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[14] RACINE, etc.—Racine, a famous French dramatist of the seventeenth century; Voltaire, an eighteenth century philosopher and man of letters; Batteux, a professor of Greek and Latin philosophy in the College of France; Boileau, a French poet and eminent critic; Montesquieu, a French philosopher and political writer; Mably, a French historian and publicist; Quesnay, a French economic writer.

[15] LA FLÈCHE—Hume lived in La Flèche, a town in France, for a time. Here he wrote his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.*

[16] DOCTRINE OF RENT—Chapter XI of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* is entitled "Of the Rent of Land."

"Natural History of Religion,"[17] are thrashed and sifted with the same mechanical impartiality!

With Sir Walter Scott[18] at the head of our literature, it cannot be denied that much of this evil is past, or rapidly passing away: our chief literary men, whatever other faults they may have, no longer live among us like a French Colony, or some knot of Propaganda,[19] Missionaries; but like natural-born subjects of the soil, partaking and sympathizing in all our attachments, humors and habits. Our literature no longer grows in water but in mould,[20] and with the true racy virtues of the soil and climate. How much of this change may be due to Burns, or to any other individual, it might be difficult to estimate. Direct literary imitation of Burns was not to be looked for. But his example, in the fearless adoption of domestic subjects, could not but operate from afar; and certainly in no heart did the love of country ever burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns: "a tide of Scottish prejudice,"[21] as he modestly calls this deep and generous feeling, "had been poured along his veins; and he felt that it would boil there till the flood-gates shut in eternal rest." It seemed to him, as if *he* could do so little for his country, and yet would so gladly have done all. One small province stood open for him,—that of Scottish Song; and how eagerly he entered on it, how devotedly he labored there! In his toilsome journeyings, this object never quits him; it is the little happy-valley of his careworn heart. In the gloom of his own affliction, he eagerly searches after some lonely brother of the muse, and rejoices to snatch one other name from the oblivion that was covering it! These were early feelings, and they abode with him to the end:

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[17] NATURAL HISTORY OF RELIGION—An allusion to David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning the Natural History of Religion.*

[18] SIR WALTER SCOTT—Scott's poetry and his novels grew out of his interest in the history and antiquity of Scotland.

[19] PROPAGANDA—"The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" established in Rome in the seventeenth century.

[20] MOULD—Earth.

[21] A TIDE OF SCOTTISH PREJUDICE—Burns says in a letter to Dr. Moore, that *The History of Sir William Wallace* "poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest."

. . . A wish [22] (I mind its power),
A wish, that to my latest hour
Will strongly heave my breast,—
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.

The rough bur Thistle spreading wide
Among the bearded bear, [23]
I turn'd my weeding-clips aside,
And spared the symbol dear.[24]

[22] A WISH, etc.—From the poem entitled *To the Guidwife of Wauchope-House, in Answer to an Epistle Which She Had Sent the Author.*

[23] BEAR—Barley. Tennyson uses the expression "bearded barley" in *The Lady of Shalott.*

[24] SYMBOL DEAR—That is, the thistle, the emblem of Scotland.

XI

BUT to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones: the Life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow-men. These Poems are but like little rhymed fragments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed Romance of his earthly existence; and it is only when intercalated [1] in this at their proper places, that they attain their full measure of significance. And this, too, alas, was but a fragment! The plan of a mighty edifice had been sketched; some columns, porticos, firm masses of building, stand completed; the rest more or less clearly indicated; with many a far-stretching tendency, which only studious and friendly eyes can now trace towards the purposed termination. For the work is broken off in the middle, almost in the beginning; and rises among us, beautiful and sad, at once unfinished and a ruin! If charitable judgment was necessary in estimating his Poems, and justice required that the aim and the manifest power to fulfill it must often be accepted for the fulfillment; much more is this the case in regard to his Life, the sum and result of all his endeavors, where his difficulties came upon him not in detail only, but in mass; and so much has been left unaccomplished, nay was mistaken, and altogether marred.

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[1] INTERCALATED—That is, introduced.

Properly speaking, there is but one era in the life of Burns, and that the earliest. We have not youth and manhood, but only youth: for, to the end, we discern no decisive change in the complexion of his character; in his thirty-seventh year he is still, as it were, in youth. With all that resoluteness of judgment, that penetrating insight, and singular maturity of intellectual power, exhibited in his writings, he never attains to any clearness regarding himself; to the last, he never ascertains his peculiar aim, even with such distinctness as is common among ordinary men; and therefore never can pursue it with that singleness of will, which insures success and some contentment to such men. To the last, he wavers between two purposes: glorying in his talent, like a true poet, he yet cannot consent to make this his chief and sole glory, and to follow it as the one thing needful, through poverty or riches, through good or evil report. Another far meaner ambition still cleaves to him; he must dream and struggle about a certain "Rock of Independence";[2] which, natural and even admirable as it might be, was still but a warring with the world, on the comparatively insignificant ground of his being more completely or less completely supplied with money than others; of his standing at a higher or a lower altitude in general estimation than others. For the world still appears to him, as to the young, in borrowed colors: he expects from it what it cannot give to any man; seeks for contentment, not within himself, in action and wise effort, but from without, in the kindness of circumstances, in love, friendship, honor, pecuniary ease. He would be happy, not actively and in himself, but passively and from some ideal cornucopia[3] of Enjoyments, not earned by his own labor, but showered on him by the beneficence of Destiny. Thus, like a young man, he cannot gird himself up for any worthy well-calculated goal, but swerves to and fro, between passionate hope and remorseful disappointment: rushing onwards with a deep tempestuous force, he surmounts or breaks asunder many a barrier; travels, nay advances far, but advancing only under uncertain guidance, is ever and anon turned from his path; and to the last cannot reach the only true happiness of a man, that of clear decided Activity in the sphere for which, by nature and circumstances, he has been fitted and appointed.

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[2] Rock of Independence—In a letter to Alexander Cunningham, Esq., a lawyer of Edinburgh, Burns wrote in 1790 to the effect that he hoped to "rear up the superstructure of Independence, and from its daring turrets, bid defiance to the storms of fate." "And is this not," he asked, "a 'consummation devoutly to be wished?'"

[3] Cornucopia—An emblem of abundance or plenty. See the legend of Amalthea in Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable.*

We do not say these things in dispraise of Burns; nay, perhaps, they but interest us the more in his favor. This blessing is not given soonest to the best; but rather, it is often the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it; for where most is to be developed, most time may be required to develop it. A complex condition had been assigned him from without; as complex a condition from within: no "preëstablished harmony" existed between the clay soil of Mossgiel and the empyrean [4] soul of Robert Burns; it was not wonderful that the adjustment between them should have been long postponed, and his arm long cumbered, and his sight confused, in so vast and discordant an economy as he had been appointed steward over. Byron was, at his death, but a year younger than Burns; and through life, as it might have appeared, far more simply situated: yet in him too we can trace no such adjustment, no such moral manhood; but at best, and only a little before his end, the beginning of what seemed such.

By much the most striking incident in Burns's Life is his journey to Edinburgh; but perhaps a still more important one is his residence at Irvine,[5] so early as in his twenty-third year. Hitherto his life had been poor and toilworn; but otherwise not ungenial, and, with all its distresses, by no means unhappy. In his parentage, deducting outward circumstances, he had every reason to reckon himself fortunate. His father[6] was a man of thoughtful, intense, earnest character, as the best of our peasants are, valuing knowledge, possessing some, and, what is far better and rarer, open-minded for more: a man with a keen insight and devout heart; reverent towards God, friendly therefore at once, and fearless towards all that God has made: in one word, though but a hard-handed peasant, a complete and fully unfolded *Man.* Such a father is seldom found in any rank in society; and was worth descending far in society to seek. Unfortunately, he was very poor; had he been even a little richer, almost never so little, the whole might have issued far otherwise. Mighty events turn on a straw; the crossing of a brook[7] decides the conquest of the world. Had this William Burns's small seven acres of nursery-ground anywise prospered, the boy Robert had been sent to school; had struggled forward, as so many weaker men do, to some university; come forth not as a rustic wonder, but as a regular well-trained intellectual workman, and changed the whole course of British Literature—for it lay in him to have done this! But the nursery did not prosper; poverty sank his whole family below the help of even our cheap school-system: Burns remained a hard-worked plowboy, and British Literature took its own course. Nevertheless, even in this rugged scene there is much to nourish him. If he drudges, it is with his brother, and for his father and mother, whom he loves, and would fain shield from want. Wisdom is not banished from their poor hearth, nor the balm of natural feeling: the solemn words, *Let us worship God,* are heard there from a "priest-like father";[8] if threatenings of unjust men throw mother and children into tears, these are tears not of grief only, but of holiest affection; every heart in that humble group feels itself the closer knit to every other; in their hard warfare they are there together, a "little band of brethren." Neither are such tears, and the deep beauty that dwells in them, their only portion. Light visits the hearts as it does the eyes of all living: there is a force, too, in this youth, that enables him to trample on misfortune; nay to bind it under his feet to make him sport. For a bold, warm, buoyant humor of character has been given him; and so the thick-coming shapes of evil are welcomed with a gay, friendly irony, and in their closest pressure he bates no jot of heart or hope. Vague yearnings of ambition fail not, as he grows up; dreamy fancies hang like cloud-cities around him; the curtain of Existence is slowly rising, in many-colored splendor and gloom: and the auroral light of first love is gilding his horizon, and the music of song is on his path; and so he walks

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[4] EMPYREAN—Composed of pure fire.

[5] IRVINE—A town where Burns spent six months in 1781–82, learning the trade of a flax-dresser. Lockhart says: "It is from this period that his brother dates a serious change." Here he seems to have formed associations which led to convivial dissipation.

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[6] HIS FATHER, etc.—The picture of the Father in *The Cottar's Saturday Night* is based on Burns's own father.

[7] THE CROSSING OF A BROOK—The allusion is to Cæsar's crossing of the Rubicon. See *PROSE AND POETRY, Eleventh Year,* page 634.

[8] PRIEST-LIKE FATHER—See *The Cottar's Saturday Night.*

> . . . . . in glory and in joy,[9]
> Behind his plow, upon the mountain side.

[9] In glory and in joy—A quotation from Wordsworth's *Leech Gatherer,* or *Resolution and Independence.* The exact wording of the lines is as follows:

> Of him who walked in glory and in joy,
> Following his plough, along the mountain side.

XII

We ourselves know, from the best evidence, that up to this date Burns was happy; nay that he was the gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being to be found in the world;[1] more so even than he ever afterwards appeared. But now, at this early age, he quits the paternal roof; goes forth into looser, louder, more exciting society; and becomes initiated in those dissipations, those vices, which a certain class of philosophers have asserted to be a natural preparative for entering on active life; a kind of mud-bath, in which the youth is, as it were, necessitated to steep, and, we suppose, cleanse himself, before the real toga of Manhood can be laid on him. We shall not dispute much with this class of philosophers; we hope they are mistaken; for Sin and Remorse so easily beset us at all stages of life, and are always such indifferent company, that it seems hard we should, at any stage, be forced and fated not only to meet but to yield to them, and even serve for a term in their leprous armada.[2] We hope it is not so. Clear we are, at all events, it cannot be the training one receives in this Devil's-service, but only our determining to desert from it, that fits us for true manly Action. We become men, not after we have been dissipated, and disappointed in the chase of false pleasure; but after we have ascertained, in any way, what impassable barriers hem us in through this life; how mad it is to hope for contentment to our infinite soul from the *gifts* of this extremely finite world; that a man must be sufficient for himself; and that for suffering and enduring there is no remedy but striving and doing. Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins even when we have surrendered to Necessity, as the most part only do; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity; and thus, in reality, triumphed over it, and felt that in Necessity we are free. Surely, such lessons as this last, which in one shape or other, is the grand lesson for every mortal man, are better learned from the lips of a devout mother, in the looks and actions of a devout father, while the heart is yet soft and pliant, than in collision with the sharp adamant of Fate, attracting us to shipwreck us, when the heart is grown hard, and may be broken before it will become contrite. Had Burns continued to learn this, as he was already learning it, in his father's cottage, he would have learned it fully, which he never did; and been saved many a lasting aberration,[3] many a bitter hour and year of remorseful sorrow.

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[1] Gayest, brightest . . . in the world—The evidence upon which Carlyle bases his statement is given by Mr. John Murdoch, a schoolmaster, quoted in Lockhart's *Life of Burns,* Chapter I.

It seems to us another circumstance of fatal import in Burns's history, that at this time too he became involved in the religious quarrels of his district; that he was enlisted and feasted, as the fighting man of the New-Light Priesthood, in their highly unprofitable warfare. At the tables of these free-minded clergy he learned much more than was needful for him. Such liberal ridicule of fanaticism awakened in his mind scruples about Religion itself; and a whole world of Doubts, which it required quite another set of conjurors than these men to exorcise.[4] We do not say that such an intellect as his could have escaped similar doubts at some period of his history; or even that he could, at a later period, have come through them altogether victorious and unharmed: but it seems peculiarly unfortunate that this time, above all others, should have been fixed for the encounter. For now, with principles assailed by evil example from without, by "passions raging like demons"[5] from within, he had little need of skeptical misgivings to whisper treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there; but wild Desires and wild Repentance alternately oppress him. Ere long, too, he has committed himself before the world; his character for sobriety, dear to a Scottish peasant as few corrupted worldlings can even conceive, is destroyed in the eyes of men; and his only refuge consists in trying to disbelieve his guiltiness, and is but a refuge of lies. The blackest desperation now gathers over him, broken only by red lightnings of remorse. The whole fabric of his life is blasted asunder; for now not only his character, but his personal liberty, is to be lost; men and Fortune are leagued for his hurt; "hungry Ruin has him in the wind."[6] He sees no escape but the saddest of all: exile from his loved country, to a country in every sense inhospitable and abhorrent to him. While the "gloomy night is gathering fast,"[7] in mental storm and solitude, as well as in physical, he sings his wild farewell to Scotland:

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[2] Leprous armada—That is, as sailors were formerly forced into service. An armada is a fleet.

[3] Aberration—That is, deviation from the right, error.

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[4] EXORCISE—To drive or cast out, as of spirits or demons.

[5] PASSIONS RAGING LIKE DEMONS—Quoted inexactly from Burns's long letter to Dr. Moore, August 2, 1787. Burns said, "My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme."

[6] HUNGRY RUIN HAS HIM IN THE WIND—After Burns had written his *Holy Fair* and *Holy Willie's Prayer* he contemplated going to America. He says in the same letter to Dr. Moore, "As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde, for

'Hungry ruin had me in the wind.'"

Farewell, my friends; farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those:
The bursting tears my heart declare;
Adieu, my native banks of Ayr!

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[7] GLOOMY NIGHT IS GATHERING FAST—Quoted from Burns's song, *Farewell to the Banks of Ayr.* Burns says, "I composed this song as I conveyed my chest so far on my road to Grennock, where I was to embark in a few days to Jamaica. I meant it as my farewell dirge to my native land."

XIII

LIGHT breaks suddenly in on him in floods; but still a false transitory light, and no real sunshine. He is invited to Edinburgh; hastens thither with anticipating heart; is welcomed as in a triumph, and with universal blandishment[1] and acclamation; whatever is wisest, whatever is greatest or loveliest there, gathers round him, to gaze on his face, to show him honor, sympathy, affection. Burns's appearance among the sages and nobles of Edinburgh must be regarded as one of the most singular phenomena in modern Literature; almost like the appearance of some Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of modern Politics. For it is nowise as "a mockery king,"[2] set there by favor, transiently and for a purpose, that he will let himself be treated; still less is he a mad Rienzi,[3] whose sudden elevation turns his too weak head: but he stands there on his own basis; cool, unastonished, holding his equal rank from Nature herself; putting forth no claim which there is not strength *in* him, as well as about him, to vindicate. Mr. Lockhart has some forcible observations on this point:

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[1] BLANDISHMENT—Acclaim and flattery.

[2] MOCKERY KING—From Scene 1, Act IV of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, "Oh, that I were a mockery king of snow!"

[3] RIENZI—Niccolo Gabrini Rienzi (1313–1354), a Roman tribune and reformer. His abuse of power led to his being put to death by the infuriated populace.

"It needs no effort of imagination," says he, "to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plowtail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation a most thorough conviction, that in the society of the most eminent men of his nation he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bon-mots*[4] of the most celebrated convivialists[5] by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble—nay, to tremble visibly—beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and last, and probably worst of all, who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit, in all likelihood still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had ere long no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves."

The farther we remove from this scene, the more singular will it seem to us: details of the exterior aspect of it are already full of interest. Most readers recollect Mr. Walker's[6] personal interviews with Burns as among the best passages of his Narrative: a time will come when this reminiscence of Sir Walter Scott's, slight though it is, will also be precious:

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[4] *Bon-mots*—Witty repartee.

[5] CONVIVIALISTS—Winers and diners.

[6] MR. WALKER—The biographer of Burns referred to in the opening paragraphs of the *Essay*.

"As for Burns," writes Sir Walter, "I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum.*[7] I was a lad of fifteen in 1786–7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him: but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner; but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's,[8] where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's,[9] representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side—on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath:

" 'Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptized in tears.'

"Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather by the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were; and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's[10] called by the unpromising title of "The Justice of Peace." I whispered my information to a friend present; he mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

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[7] *Virgilium vidi tantum*—From Ovid's *Tristia,* IV: 10, 51, "I once saw Vergil."

[8] PROFESSOR FERGUSON—Who was professor of moral philosophy at Edinburgh before Professor Stewart.

[9] BUNBURY—Henry William Bunbury (1750–1811), best known as a caricaturist.

"His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture:[11] but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I should have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, *i.e.*, none of your modern agriculturists who keep laborers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman*[12] who held his own plow. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh: but (considering what literary emoluments[13] have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

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[10] LANGHORNE—John Langhorne, a minor poet, best known for the translation which he and his brother made of Plutarch's *Lives*.

[11] MR. NASMYTHE'S PICTURE—This portrait was made when Burns was about twenty-six years old. The picture is reproduced at the end of the *Essay* in connection with *The Life of Burns*.

[12] *Douce gudeman*—Sober good man.

"I remember, on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited; and also that, having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Fergusson,[14] he talked of them with too much humility as his models: there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate.

"This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem,*[15] when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station or information more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this. I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since."

The conduct of Burns under this dazzling blaze of favor; the calm, unaffected, manly manner in which he not only bore it, but estimated its value, has justly been regarded as the best proof that could be given of his real vigor and integrity of mind. A little natural vanity, some touches of hypocritical modesty, some glimmerings of affectation, at least some fear of being thought affected, we could have pardoned in almost any man; but no such indication is to be traced here. In his unexampled situation the young peasant is not a moment perplexed; so many strange lights do not confuse him, do not lead him astray. Nevertheless, we cannot but perceive that this winter did him great and lasting injury. A somewhat clearer knowledge of men's affairs, scarcely of their characters, it did afford him; but a sharper feeling of Fortune's unequal arrangements in their social destiny it also left with him. He had seen the gay and gorgeous arena, in which the powerful are born to play their parts; nay had himself stood in the midst of it; and he felt more bitterly than ever, that here he was but a looker-on, and had no part or lot in that splendid game. From this time a jealous indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him; and perverts, so far as aught could pervert, his private contentment, and his feelings towards his richer fellows. It was clear to Burns that he had talent enough to make a fortune, or a hundred fortunes, could he but have rightly willed this; it was clear also that he willed something far different, and therefore could not make one. Unhappy it was that he had not power to choose the one, and reject the other; but must halt forever between two opinions, two objects; making hampered advancement towards either. But so is it with many men: we "long for the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price"; and so stand chaffering with Fate, in vexatious altercation, till the night come, and our fair is over!

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[13] EMOLUMENTS—That is, financial returns. Scott himself became a wealthy man as a result of his writings.

[14] ALLAN RAMSAY AND OF FERGUSSON—See Note 9, Part II.

[15] *In malam partem*—Disparagingly.

The Edinburgh Learned of that period were in general more noted for clearness of head than for warmth of heart: with the exception of the good old Blacklock,[16] whose help was too ineffectual, scarcely one among them seems to have looked at Burns with any true sympathy, or indeed much otherwise than as at a highly curious *thing*. By the great also he is treated in the customary fashion; entertained at their tables and dismissed: certain modica[17] of pudding and praise are, from time to time, gladly exchanged for the fascination of his presence; which exchange once affected, the bargain is finished, and each party goes his several way. At the end of this strange season, Burns gloomily sums up his gains and losses, and meditates on the chaotic future. In money he is somewhat richer; in fame and the show of happiness, infinitely richer; but in the substance of it, as poor as ever. Nay poorer; for his heart is now maddened still more with the fever of worldly Ambition; and through long years the disease will rack him with unprofitable sufferings, and weaken his strength for all true and nobler aims.

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[16] BLACKLOCK—Burns says, "I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, *The gloomy night is gathering fast*, when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition." Dr. Thomas Blacklock, a blind poet of Edinburgh, after having heard this poem of Burns, wrote Burns a letter of encouragement.

[17] MODICA—Small particles or portions.

XIV

WHAT Burns was next to do or to avoid; how a man so circumstanced was now to guide himself towards his true advantage, might at this point of time have been a question for the wisest. It was a question too, which apparently he was left altogether to answer for himself: of his learned or rich patrons it had not struck any individual to turn a thought on this so trivial matter. Without claiming for Burns the praise of perfect sagacity, we must say, that his Excise and Farm scheme[1] does not seem to us a very unreasonable one; that we should be at a loss, even now, to suggest one decidedly better. Certain of his admirers have felt scandalized at his ever resolving to *gauge*,[2] and would have had him lie at the pool,[3] till the spirit of Patronage[4] stirred the waters, that so, with one friendly plunge, all his sorrows might be healed. Unwise counselors! They know not the manner of this spirit; and how, in the lap of most golden dreams, a man might have happiness, were it not that in the interim he must die of hunger! It reflects credit on the manliness and sound sense of Burns, that he felt so early on what ground he was standing, and preferred self-help, on the humblest scale, to dependence and inaction, though with hope of far more splendid possibilities. But even these possibilities were not rejected in his scheme: he might expect, if it chanced that he *had* any friend, to rise, in no long period, into something even like opulence and leisure; while again, if it chanced that he had no friend, he could still live in security; and for the rest, he "did not intend to borrow honor from any profession." We reckon that his plan was honest and well-calculated: all turned on the execution of it. Doubtless it failed; yet not, we believe, from any vice inherent in itself. Nay, after all, it was no failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. His was no bankruptcy of the purse, but of the soul; to his last day, he owed no man anything.

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[1] EXCISE AND FARM SCHEME—In 1788 Burns took up a farm at Elliesland. His farming speculations, however, once more failed and in the autumn of 1788 he applied for actual employment as an excise man and was accordingly appointed to do duty in that capacity.

[2] *Gauge*—One of his duties as an excise man was to gauge or measure whisky barrels. He had other duties such as prosecuting infringements of the excise law, etc.

[3] LIE AT THE POOL—See *John* v: 2–9: "Now there is at Jerusalem . . . a pool, which is called . . . Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. . . ."

[4] PATRONAGE—See Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,* Notes on Page 241, in *PROSE AND POETRY, Tenth Year.*

Meanwhile he begins well: with two good and wise actions. His donation to his mother, munificent from a man whose income had lately been seven pounds a year, was worthy of him, and not more than worthy. Generous also, and worthy of him, was the treatment of the woman[5] whose life's welfare now depended on his pleasure. A friendly observer might have hoped serene days for him: his mind is on the true road to peace with itself: what clearness he still wants will be given as he proceeds; for the best teacher of duties, that still lie dim to us, is the Practice of those we see and have at hand. Had the "patrons of genius," who could give him nothing, but taken nothing from him, at least nothing more! The wounds of his heart would have healed, vulgar ambition would have died away. Toil and Frugality would have been welcome, since Virtue dwelt with them: and Poetry would have shone through them as of old: and in her clear ethereal light, which was his own by birthright, he might have looked down on his earthly destiny, and all its obstructions, not with patience only, but with love.

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[5] WOMAN—His wife. See the poem *Of A' The Airts the Wind Can Blaw* in Selected Poems, following this *Essay*.

But the patrons of genius would not have it so. Picturesque tourists, all manner of fashionable danglers after literature, and, far worse, all manner of convivial Mæcenases,[6] hovered round him in his retreat; and his good as well as his weak qualities secured them influence over him. He was flattered by their notice; and his warm social nature made it impossible for him to shake them off, and hold on his way apart from them. These men, as we believe, were proximately the means of his ruin. Not that they meant him any ill; they only meant themselves a little good; if he suffered harm, let *him* look to it! But they wasted his precious time and his precious talent; they disturbed his composure, broke down his returning habits of temperance and assiduous contented exertion. Their pampering was baneful to him; their cruelty, which soon followed, was equally baneful. The old grudge against Fortune's inequality awoke with new bitterness in their neighborhood; and Burns had no retreat but to "the Rock of Independence," which is but an air-castle after all, that looks well at a distance, but will screen no one from real wind and wet. Flushed with irregular excitement, exasperated alternately by contempt of others, and contempt of himself, Burns was no longer regaining his peace of mind, but fast losing it forever. There was a hollowness at the heart of his life, for his conscience did not now approve what he was doing.

Amid the vapors of unwise enjoyment, of bootless remorse, and angry discontent with Fate, his true loadstar,[7] a life of Poetry, with Poverty, nay with Famine if it must be so, was too often altogether hidden from his eyes. And yet he sailed a sea, where without some such loadstar there was no right steering. Meteors of French Politics[8] rise before him, but these were not *his* stars. An accident this, which hastened, but did not originate, his worst distresses. In the mad contentions of that time, he comes in collision[9] with certain official Superiors; is wounded by them; cruelly lacerated, we should say, could a dead mechanical implement, in any case, be called cruel: and shrinks, in indignant pain, into deeper self-seclusion, into gloomier moodiness than ever. His life has now lost its unity: it is a life of fragments; led with little aim, beyond the melancholy one of securing its own continuance,—in fits of wild false joy when such offered, and of black despondency when they passed away. His character before the world begins to suffer: calumny[10] is busy with him; for a miserable man makes more enemies than friends. Some faults he has fallen into, and a thousand of misfortunes; but deep criminality is what he stands accused of, and they that are *not* without sin cast the first stone[11] at him! For is he not a well-wisher to the French Revolution, a Jacobin,[12] and therefore in that one act guilty of all? These accusations, political and moral, it has since appeared, were false enough: but the world hesitated little to credit them. Nay his convivial Mæcenases themselves were not the last to do it. There is reason to believe that, in his later years, the Dumfries Aristocracy had partly withdrawn themselves from Burns, as from a tainted person, no longer worthy of their acquaintance. That painful class, stationed, in all provincial cities, behind the outmost breastwork of Gentility,[13] there to stand siege and do battle against the intrusions of Grocerdom and Grazierdom, had actually seen dishonor in the society of Burns, and branded him with their veto; had, as we vulgarly say, *cut* him! We find one passage in this Work of Mr. Lockhart's, which will not out of our thoughts:

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[6] Mæcenas—A wealthy Roman who was the patron of Horace and Vergil. The term has come to be used to designate any man who encourages literary men. By "convivial Mæcenases" Carlyle refers probably to the lawyers of Edinburgh whose convivial habits were notorious and at whose invitation Burns partook largely in tavern scenes of audacious hilarity.

[7] Loadstar—A guiding star.

[8] Meteors of French Politics—What Carlyle means is that instead of pursuing poetry Burns's attention was consumed by his interest in the new doctrines of the French Revolution.

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[9] COLLISION—Lockhart says that "according to the tradition of the neighborhood, Burns . . . gave great offense by demurring in a large mixed company with the proposed toast, 'The health of William Pitt [the Prime Minister of England]'; and left the room in indignation, because the society rejected what he wished to substitute, namely, 'The health of a greater and a better man, George Washington.' " This is the incident which is said to have brought him into trouble with the Excise Board. Burns was openly sympathetic with the principles of democracy generally, both in the French and American Revolutions.

[10] CALUMNY—Slander.

[11] CAST THE FIRST STONE—See *John* viii: 7: "He lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

[12] JACOBIN—The extremists among the French Revolutionists. The term "Jacobin" in Burns's time seems to have carried about the same connotation that the term "bolshevist" does in ours.

"A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has often told me that he was seldom more grieved, than when riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening about this time to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognize him. The horseman dismounted, and joined Burns, who on his proposing to cross the street said: 'Nay, nay, my young friend, that's all over now;' and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's[14] pathetic ballad:

" 'His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he lets 't wear ony way it will hing,
And casts himself dowie[15] upon the corn-bing.[16]
O, were we young as we ance hae been,
We sud hae been gallopping down on yon green,
And linking[17] it ower the lily-white lea!
And werena my heart light, I wad die.'

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after reciting these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably till the hour of the ball arrived."

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[13] THE OUTMOST BREASTWORK OF GENTILITY—Carlyle alludes here to the snobbish exclusiveness of the small-town aristocracy which felt itself of different clay from shopkeepers and farmers, whom he alludes to as the "Grocerdom and Grazierdom." The quotation from Lockhart makes the point clear.

[14] LADY GRIZZEL BAILLIE—A Scottish poet. Some of her ballads are preserved in Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*. The best known of them is the one quoted in part here.

[15] DOWIE—Mournfully.

[16] CORN-BING—Heap of corn.

[17] LINKING—Tripping along.

Alas! when we think that Burns now sleeps "where bitter indignation can no longer lacerate his heart,"[18] and that most of those fair dames and frizzled gentlemen already lie at his side, where the breastwork of gentility is quite thrown down—who would not sigh over the thin delusions and foolish toys that divide heart from heart, and make man unmerciful to his brother!

It was not now to be hoped that the genius of Burns would ever reach maturity, or accomplish aught worthy of itself. His spirit was jarred in its melody; not the soft breath of natural feeling, but the rude hand of Fate, was now sweeping over the strings. And yet what harmony was in him, what music even in his discords! How the wild tones had a charm for the simplest and the wisest; and all men felt and knew that here also was one of the Gifted! "If he entered[19] an inn at midnight, after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled!" Some brief pure moments of poetic life were yet appointed him, in the composition of his Songs. We can understand how he grasped at this employment; and how too, he spurned all other reward[20] for it but what the labor itself brought him. For the soul of Burns, though scathed and marred, was yet living in its full moral strength, though sharply conscious of its errors and abasement: and here, in his destitution and degradation, was one act of seeming nobleness and self-devotedness left even for him to perform. He felt too, that with all the "thoughtless follies"[21] that had "laid him low," the world was unjust and cruel to him; and he silently appealed to another and calmer time. Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country: so he cast from him the poor sixpence a-day, and served zealously as a volunteer.[22] Let us not grudge him his last luxury of his existence; let him not have appealed to us in vain! The money was not necessary to him; he struggled through without it: long since, these guineas would have been gone, and now the high-mindedness of refusing them will plead for him in all hearts forever.

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[18] WHERE BITTER INDIGNATION, ETC.—This is the epitaph which appears in Latin over the grave of Jonathan Swift. Swift, who was embittered by the slight recognition which he felt his genius received, composed his own epitaph.

[19] IF HE ENTERED, ETC.—Quoted from Lockhart, who also says: "From the castle to the cottage, every door flew open at his approach. The farmer, if Burns was seen passing, left his reapers. . . . The stateliest gentry of the country . . . called in the wit and eloquence of Burns. . . . Lion-gazers from all quarters beset him."

[20] SPURNED ALL OTHER REWARD—Carlyle evidently had in mind a letter written by Burns to George Thomson for whose collection of *Scottish Airs* Burns wrote a number of songs. Burns wrote, "As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, etc., would be downright prostitution of the soul." Burns also contributed largely to Johnson's *Museum of Scottish Song*. Lockhart says, "And yet, so far from looking to Mr. Johnson for any pecuniary remuneration for the laborious part he took in his work,

We are here arrived at the crisis of Burns's life; for matters had now taken such a shape with him as could not long continue. If improvement was not to be looked for, Nature could only for a limited time maintain this dark and maddening warfare against the world and itself. We are not medically informed whether any continuance of years was, at this period, probable for Burns; whether his death is to be looked on as in some sense an accidental event, or only as the natural consequence of the long series of events that had preceded. The latter seems to be the likelier opinion; and yet it is by no means a certain one. At all events, as we have said, *some* change could not be very distant. Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open

it appears from a passage in Cromek's *Reliques*, that the poet asked a single copy of the *Museum* to give to a fair friend, by way of a great favour to himself—and that that copy and his own were really all he received at the hands of the publisher."

[21] THOUGHTLESS FOLLIES . . . LAID HIM LOW—Quoted from *A Bard's Epitaph*.

[22] VOLUNTEER—Lockhart says, "When the [Napoleonic] war had fairly broken out, a battalion of volunteers was formed in Dumfries, and Burns was an original member of the corps. . . . He was their laureate, and in that capacity did more good service to the government 'than any other person of his rank.'"

for Burns: clear poetical activity; madness; or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable; for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it: and yet Burns had an iron resolution; could he but have seen and felt, that not only his highest glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes, lay here. The second was still less probable; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him: and he passed, not softly yet speedily, into that still country, where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!

XV

Contemplating this sad end of Burns, and how he sank unaided by any real help, uncheered by any wise sympathy, generous minds have sometimes figured to themselves, with a reproachful sorrow, that much might have been done for him; that by counsel, true affection and friendly ministrations, he might have been saved to himself and the world. We question whether there is not more tenderness of heart than soundness of judgment in these suggestions. It seems dubious to us whether the richest, wisest, most benevolent individual could have lent Burns any effectual help. Counsel, which seldom profits any one, he did not need; in his understanding, he knew the right from the wrong, as well perhaps as any man ever did; but the persuasion, which would have availed him, lies not so much in the head as in the heart, where no argument or expostulation could have assisted much to implant it. As to money again, we do not believe that this was his essential want; or well see how any private man could, even presupposing Burns's consent, have bestowed on him an independent fortune, with much prospect of decisive advantage. It is a mortifying truth, that two men in any rank of society, could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact:

Friendship, in the old heroic sense of that term, no longer exists; except in the cases of kindred or other legal affinity, it is in reality no longer expected, or recognized as a virtue among men. A close observer of manners has pronounced "Patronage," that is, pecuniary or other economic furtherance, to be "twice cursed"; [1] cursing him that gives, and him that takes! And thus, in regard to outward matters also, it has become the rule, as in regard to inward it always was and must be the rule, that no one shall look for effectual help to another; but that each shall rest contented with what help he can afford himself. Such, we say, is the principle of modern Honor; naturally enough growing out of that sentiment of Pride, which we inculcate and encourage as the basis of our whole social morality. Many a poet has been poorer than Burns; but no one was ever prouder: we may question whether, without great precautions, even a pension from Royalty would not have galled and encumbered, more than actually assisted him.

Still less, therefore, are we disposed to join with another class of Burns's admirers, who accuse the higher ranks among us of having ruined Burns by their selfish neglect of him. We have already stated our doubts whether direct pecuniary help, had it been offered, would have been accepted, or could have proved very effectual. We shall readily admit, however, that much was to be done for Burns; that many a poisoned arrow might have been warded from his bosom; many an entanglement in his path cut asunder by the hand of the powerful; and light and heat, shed on him from high places, would have made his humble atmosphere more genial; and the softest heart then breathing might have lived and died with some fewer pangs. Nay, we shall grant farther, and for Burns it is granting much, that, with all his pride, he would have thanked, even with exaggerated gratitude, any one who had cordially befriended him: patronage, unless once cursed, needed not to have been twice so. At all events, the poor promotion he desired in his calling might have been granted: it was his own scheme, therefore likelier than any other to be of service. All this it might have been a luxury, nay it was a duty, for our nobility to have done. No part of all this, however, did any of them do; or apparently attempt, or wish to do: so much is granted against them. But what then is the amount of their blame? Simply that they were men of the world, and walked by the principles of such men; that they treated Burns, as other nobles and other commoners had done other poets; as the English did Shakespeare;[2] as King Charles and his Cavaliers did Butler,[3] as King Philip and his Grandees did Cervantes.[4] Do men gather grapes of thorns;[5] or shall we cut down our thorns for yielding only a *fence* and haws?[6] How, indeed, could the "nobility and gentry of his native land" hold out any help to this "Scottish Bard, proud of his name and country"? Were the nobility and gentry so much as able rightly to help themselves? Had they not their game to preserve; their borough interests[7] to strengthen; dinners, therefore, of various kinds to eat and give? Were their means more than adequate to all this business, or less than adequate? Less than adequate, in general; few of them in reality were richer than Burns; many of them were poorer; for sometimes they had to wring their supplies, as with thumbscrews, from the hard hand; and, in their need of guineas, to forget their duty of mercy; which Burns was never reduced to do. Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the *little* Babylons[8] they severally builded by the glory of their might, are all melted or melting back into the primeval Chaos,[9] as man's merely selfish endeavors are fated to do: and here was an action, extending, in virtue of its worldly influence, we may say, through all time; in virtue of its moral nature, beyond all time, being immortal as the Spirit of Goodness itself; this action was offered them to do, and light was not given them to do it. Let us pity and forgive them. But better than pity, let us go and *do otherwise*.[10] Human suffering did not end with the life of Burns; neither was the solemn mandate, "Love one another, bear one another's burdens,"[11] given to the rich only, but to all men. True, we shall find no Burns to relieve, to assuage by our aid or our pity; but celestial natures, groaning under the fardels[12] of a weary life, we shall still find; and that wretchedness which Fate has rendered *voiceless* and *tuneless* is not the least wretched, but the most.

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[1] TWICE CURSED—Suggested by "twice blessed" in Portia's Mercy speech in *The Merchant of Venice*. See *PROSE AND POETRY, Tenth Year*.

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[2] SHAKESPEARE—See the life of Shakespeare in *PROSE AND POETRY, Eleventh Year*. Shakespeare, however, seems to have enjoyed more favor than Burns did.

[3] BUTLER—Samuel Butler. See Note 1, Part I of this *Essay*.

[4] CERVANTES—Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616), author of the world-renowned *Don Quixote*. Though received with enthusiasm *Don Quixote* brought no pecuniary reward to its author, and Cervantes lived wretchedly in squalid quarters, neglected and forgotten.

[5] GRAPES OF THORNS—See *Matthew* vii: 16: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

[6] HAWS—That is, the berries of the hawthorn plant or bush, which in England is used for hedges, supplying the place of fences.

[7] BOROUGH INTERESTS—Local politics.

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[8] THE *little* BABYLONS—Babylon was the ancient capital of Chaldea, described in the Biblical accounts as a place of selfishness, splendor, and luxury. The city was finally completely destroyed. By the expression "little Babylons" Carlyle here means the lands, wealth, and influence these men gave their time to building up. His implication is that none of these men is remembered for the "little Babylon" he built while Burns will always be remembered for his poems.

[9] PRIMEVAL CHAOS—The name given to the great void which existed before the creation of the earth. Here used somewhat in the sense of oblivion.

[10] LET US GO AND *do otherwise*—An expression which shows the influence of the Bible on Carlyle's style. See *Luke* x: 37: "Go, and do thou likewise."

[11] LOVE ONE ANOTHER, BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS—These phrases are quoted from *John* xv: 12 and *Galatians* vi: 2.

[12] FARDELS—Burdens. Here is a suggestion of Shakespeare whose Hamlet says:

. . . "who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,"

XVI

Still, we do not think that the blame of Burns's failure lies chiefly with the world. The world, it seems to us, treated him with more rather than with less kindness than it usually shows to such men. It has ever, we fear, shown but small favor to its Teachers: hunger and nakedness, perils and revilings, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice have, in most times and countries, been the market-price it has offered for Wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify it. Homer[1] and Socrates,[2] and the Christian Apostles, belong to old days; but the world's Martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon and Galileo[3] languish in priestly dungeons; Tasso[4] pines in the cell of a madhouse; Camoëns[5] dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so "persecuted they the Prophets,"[6] not in Judea only, but in all places where men have been. We reckon that every poet of Burns's order is, or should be, a prophet and teacher to his age; that he has no right to expect great kindness from it, but rather is bound to do it great kindness; that Burns, in particular, experienced fully the usual proportion of the world's goodness; and that the blame of his failure, as we have said, lies not chiefly with the world.

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[1] HOMER—Carlyle has here in mind the tradition that Homer was a blind, wandering minstrel who was not appreciated until after his death.

"Seven cities warred for Homer being dead,
Who living had no roof to shroud his head."

[2] SOCRATES—The greatest philosopher of antiquity. He was convicted of corrupting the youth and according to custom was condemned to drink the poison hemlock. The term "poison-chalice" above of course comes from Macbeth's soliloquy. See *Macbeth,* Act I, Scene 7.

[3] ROGER BACON AND GALILEO—Bacon was a thirteenth century English philosopher and man of science, one of the greatest scholars of his time. Galileo was a famous Italian philosopher and inventor of the telescope. Both men because of their "heresies" were confined in prison. Carlyle's point here is that both of these men were somewhat ahead of their times and both paid the penalty for their advanced ideas.

[4] TASSO—Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), an Italian epic poet. His greatest work is *Gerusalemme liberata* (Jerusalem Delivered), which is the story of the taking of Jerusalem during the Third Crusade. It is said that due to extreme fear of criticism of his writings he was subject to mad flights and wanderings. At one time he was confined for seven years as a madman.

[5] CAMOËNS—A celebrated Portuguese poet of the sixteenth century. He met with royal displeasure and as a result was banished from the country. He returned to Portugal many years later, but was never reinstated in the royal favor, and he died of the plague in Lisbon in 1580.

[6] SO PERSECUTED THEY THE PROPHETS—These lines come from *Matthew* v: 12: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Where, then, does it lie? We are forced to answer: With himself; it is his inward, not his outward misfortunes that bring him to the dust. Seldom, indeed, is it otherwise; seldom is a life morally wrecked but the grand cause lies in some internal mal-arrangement, some want less of good fortune than of good guidance. Nature fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration; least of all does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul. Neither can we believe that it is in the power of *any* external circumstances utterly to ruin the mind of a man; nay if proper wisdom be given him, even so much as to affect its essential health and beauty. The sternest sum-total of all worldly misfortunes is Death; nothing more *can* lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men, in all ages, have triumphed over Death, and led it captive; converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, into a real and immortal consecration for all that their past life had achieved. What has been done, may be done again: nay, it is but the degree and not the kind of such heroism that differs in different seasons; for without some portion of this spirit, not of boisterous daring, but of silent fearlessness, of Self-denial in all its forms, no good man, in any scene or time, has ever attained to be good.

We have already stated the error of Burns; and mourned over it, rather than blamed it. It was the want of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims; the hapless attempt to mingle in friendly union the common spirit of the world with the spirit of poetry, which is of a far different and altogether irreconcilable nature. Burns was nothing wholly, and Burns could be nothing, no man formed as he was can be anything, by halves. The heart, not of a mere hot-blooded, popular Versemonger, or poetical *Restaurateur*,[7] but of a true Poet and Singer, worthy of the old religious heroic times, had been given him: and he fell in an age, not of heroism and religion, but of skepticism, selfishness and triviality, when true Nobleness was little understood, and its place supplied by a hollow, dissocial, altogether barren and unfruitful principle of Pride. The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually difficult for him to cast aside, or rightly subordinate; the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy: he spent his life in endeavoring to reconcile these two; and lost it, as he must lose it, without reconciling them.

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[7] Poetical *Restaurateur*—A *restaurateur* means one who keeps a place of refreshment. By the expression "poetical *restaurateur*" Carlyle has in mind poets who wrote simply for the amusement of their readers.

Burns was born poor; and born also to continue poor, for he would not endeavor to be otherwise: this it had been well could he have once for all admitted, and considered as finally settled. He was poor, truly; but hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer, yet have suffered nothing deadly from it: nay, his own Father had a far sorer battle with ungrateful destiny than his was; and he did not yield to it, but died courageously warring, and to all moral intents prevailing, against it. True, Burns had little means, had even little time for poetry, his only real pursuit and vocation; but so much the more precious was what little he had. In all these external respects his case was hard; but very far from the hardest. Poverty, incessant drudgery and much worse evils, it has often been the lot of Poets and wise men to strive with, and their glory to conquer. Locke[8] was banished as a traitor; and wrote his *Essay on the Human Understanding* sheltering himself in a Dutch garret. Was Milton rich or at his ease when he composed *Paradise Lost?* Not only low, but fallen from a height; not only poor, but impoverished; in darkness and with dangers compassed around, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience,[9] though few. Did not Cervantes finish his work, a maimed soldier and in prison? Nay, was not the *Araucana*,[10] which Spain acknowledges as its Epic, written without even the aid of paper; on scraps of leather, as the stout fighter and voyager snatched any moment from that wild warfare?

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[8] LOCKE—John Locke, a great English philosopher of the seventeenth century. He also devoted himself to medicine, and in the capacity of family physician lived with the family of Earl of Shaftesbury in the latter's London house. When the Earl of Shaftesbury became Lord Chancellor, Locke found himself involved in various conspiracies instigated by the Lord Chancellor who, finally accused of high treason, was forced to flee to Holland. Locke fled to Holland also and while there wrote the essay which was an "epoch in the history of philosophy," entitled, *An Essay on the Humane Understanding.*

And what, then, had these men, which Burns wanted?[11] Two things; both which, it seems to us, are indispensable for such men. They had a true, religious principle of morals; and a single, not a double aim in their activity. They were not self-seekers and self-worshipers; but seekers and worshipers of something far better than Self. Not personal enjoyment was their object; but a high, heroic idea of Religion, of Patriotism, of heavenly Wisdom, in one or the other form, ever hovered before them; in which cause they neither shrank from suffering, nor called on the earth to witness it as something wonderful; but patiently endured, counting it blessedness enough so to spend and be spent. Thus the "golden-calf of Self-love," however curiously carved, was not their Deity; but the Invisible Goodness, which alone is man's reasonable service. This feeling was as a celestial fountain, whose streams refreshed into gladness and beauty all the provinces of their otherwise too desolate existence. In a word, they willed one thing, to which all other things were subordinated and made subservient; and therefore they accomplished it. The wedge will rend rocks; but its edge must be sharp and single: if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces and will rend nothing.

Part of this superiority these men owed to their age; in which heroism and devotedness were still practiced, or at least not yet disbelieved in: but much of it likewise they owed to themselves. With Burns, again, it was different. His morality, in most of its practical points, is that of a mere worldly man; enjoyment, in a finer or coarser shape, is the only thing he longs and strives for. A noble instinct sometimes raises him above this; but an instinct only, and acting only for moments. He has no Religion; in the shallow age, where his days were cast, Religion was not discriminated from the New and Old Light *forms* of Religion; and was, with these, becoming obsolete in the minds of men. His heart, indeed, is alive with a trembling adoration, but there is no temple in his understanding. He lives in darkness and in the shadow of doubt. His religion, at best, is an anxious wish; like that of Rabelais,[12] "a great Perhaps."

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[9] FIT AUDIENCE—The words come from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, vii: 26–31.

On evil days though fallen, and evil tongue,
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude. . . . Still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.

See the life of Milton in this volume.

[10] *Araucana*—The epic poem written by Alonso de Ercilla. It tells the story of the poet's adventures during an expedition to subdue the Araucanians, the natives of a section of Chile. The first part of it was written in the wilderness where he fought, under the circumstances which Carlyle mentions.

[11] WANTED—Lacked.

He loved Poetry warmly, and in his heart; could he but have loved it purely, and with his whole undivided heart, it had been well. For Poetry, as Burns could have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion; is itself Wisdom and Religion. But this also was denied him. His poetry is a stray vagrant gleam, which will not be extinguished within him, yet rises not to be the true light of his path, but is often a wildfire that misleads him. It was not necessary for Burns to be rich, to be, or to seem, "independent"; but it *was* necessary for him to be at one with his own heart; to place what was highest in his nature highest also in his life; "to seek within himself for that consistency and sequence, which external events would forever refuse him." He was born a poet; poetry was the celestial element of his being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavors. Lifted into that serene ether, whither he had wings given him to mount, he would have needed no other elevation: poverty, neglect and all evil, save the desecration of himself and his Art, were a small matter to him; the pride and the passions of the world lay far beneath his feet; and he looked down alike on noble and slave, on prince and beggar, and all that wore the stamp of man, with clear recognition, with brotherly affection, with sympathy, with pity. Nay, we question whether for his culture as a Poet, poverty and much suffering for a reason were not absolutely advantageous. Great men, in looking back over their lives, have testified to that effect. "I would not for much," says Jean Paul,[13] "that I had been born richer." And yet Paul's birth was poor enough; for, in another place, he adds: "The prisoner's allowance is bread and water; and I had often only the latter." But the gold that is refined in the hottest furnace comes out the purest; or, as he has himself expressed it, "the canary-bird sings sweeter the longer it has been trained in a darkened cage."

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[12] RABELAIS—François Rabelais, a great French satirist and humorist (1490–1553). The satire "The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife" (see Modern Plays in this volume) is founded on a brief passage in Rabelais' *Lives, Heroick Deeds, and Sayings of Gargantua and His Son Pantagruel.* It is alleged that on his death bed Rabelais murmured, "I am about to seek a great perhaps."

A man like Burns might have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry; industry which all true feeling sanctions, nay prescribes, and which has a beauty, for that cause, beyond the pomp of thrones; but to divide his hours between poetry and rich man's banquets was an ill-starred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets? What had he to do there, mingling his music with the coarse roar of altogether earthly voices; brightening the thick smoke of intoxication with fire lent him from heaven? Was it his aim to *enjoy* life? To-morrow he must go drudge as an Exciseman! We wonder not that Burns became moody, indignant, and at times an offender against certain rules of society; but rather that he did not grow utterly frantic, and run *amuck*[14] against them all. How could a man, so falsely placed, by his own or others' fault, ever know contentment or peaceable diligence for an hour? What he did, under such perverse guidance, and what he forbore to do, alike fill us with astonishment at the natural strength and worth of his character.

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[13] JEAN PAUL—Johann Paul Friedrich Richter (1763–1825), usually known as simply Jean Paul, the most widely known of German humorists. He was born in a poor family, and poverty followed him throughout his life. At one time he was obliged to flee from his creditors and to lead a rambling life.

[14] *Amuck*—In a violent or frenzied manner.

XVII

Doubtless there was a remedy for this perverseness; but not in others; only in himself; least of all in simple increase of wealth and worldly "respectability." We hope we have now heard enough about the efficacy of wealth for poetry, and to make poets happy. Nay have we not seen another instance of it in these very days? Byron, a man of an endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns, is born in the rank not of a Scottish plowman, but of an English peer: the highest worldly honors, the fairest wordly career, are his by inheritance; the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in another province, by his own hand. And what does all this avail him? Is he happy, is he good, is he true? Alas, he has a poet's soul, and strives towards the Infinite and the Eternal; and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the house-top to reach the stars! Like Burns, he is only a proud man; might, like him, have "purchased[1] a pocket-copy of Milton to study the character of Satan"; for Satan also is Byron's grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently of his conduct. As in Burns's case too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth; both poet and the man of the world he must not be; vulgar Ambition will not live kindly with poetic Adoration; he *cannot* serve God and Mammon. Byron, like Burns, is not happy; nay he is the most wretched of all men. His life is falsely arranged: the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world; but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now—we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which ere long will fill itself with snow!

Byron and Burns were sent forth as missionaries to their generation, to teach it a higher Doctrine, a purer Truth; they had a message to deliver, which left them no rest till it was accomplished; in dim throes of pain, this divine behest lay smouldering within them; for they knew not what it meant, and felt it only in mysterious anticipation, and they had to die without articulately uttering it. They are in the camp of the Unconverted; yet not as high messengers of rigorous though benignant truth, but as soft flattering singers, and in pleasant fellowship will they live there: they are first adulated, then persecuted; they accomplish little for others; they find no peace for themselves, but only death and the peace of the grave. We confess, it is not without a certain mournful awe that we view the fate of these noble souls, so richly gifted, yet ruined to so little purpose with all their gifts. It seems to us there is a stern moral taught in this piece of history, *twice* told us in our own time! Surely to men of like genius, if there be any such, it carries with it a lesson of deep impressive significance. Surely it would become such a man, furnished for the highest of all enterprises, that of being the Poet of his Age, to consider well what it is that he attempts, and in what spirit he attempts it. For the words of Milton are true in all times, and were never truer than in this: "He who would write [2] heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem." If he cannot first so make his life, then let him hasten from this arena; for neither its lofty glories, nor its fearful perils, are fit for him. Let him dwindle into a modish balladmonger; let him worship and besing the idols of the time, and the time will not fail to reward him. If, indeed, he can endure to live in that capacity! Byron and Burns could not live as idol-priests, but the fire of their own hearts consumed them; and better it was for them that they could not. For it is not in the favor of the great or of the small, but in a life of truth, and in the inexpugnable [3] citadel of his own soul, that a Byron's or a Burns's strength must lie. Let the great stand aloof from him, or know how to reverence him. Beautiful is the union of wealth with favor and furtherance for literature; like the costliest flower-jar enclosing the loveliest amaranth.[4] Yet let not the relation be mistaken. A true poet is not one whom they can hire by money or flattery to be a minister of their pleasures, their writer of occasional verses, their purveyor of table-wit; he cannot be their menial, he cannot even be their partisan. At the peril of both parties, let no such union be attempted! Will a Courser of the Sun[5] work softly in the harness of a Dray-horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens, bringing light to all lands; will he lumber on mud highways, dragging ale for earthly appetites from door to door?

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[1] Purchased, etc.—Milton has been criticized for making Satan a somewhat heroic character. In a letter to a friend Burns wrote: "I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid, unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage, Satan."

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[2] He who would write, etc.—This quotation is given in full in the sketch of Milton's life in this volume.

[3] Inexpugnable—Impregnable, unconquerable.

But we must stop short in these considerations, which would lead us to boundless lengths. We had something to say on the public moral character of Burns; but this also we must forbear. We are far from regarding him as guilty before the world, as guiltier than the average; nay from doubting that he is less guilty than one of ten thousand. Tried at a tribunal far more rigid than that where the *Plebiscita*[6] of common civic reputations are pronounced, he has seemed to us even there less worthy of blame than of pity and wonder. But the world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men; unjust on many grounds, of which this one may be stated as the substance: It decides, like a court of law, by dead statutes; and not positively but negatively, less on what is done right, than on what is or is not done wrong. Not the few inches of deflection[7] from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the *ratio* of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration.

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[4] AMARANTH—An imaginary, never-fading flower.

[5] COURSER OF THE SUN—An allusion to Pegasus, the wingèd horse, presented by Minerva to the Muses. For this legend see Gayley, *Classic Myths*.

[6] *Plebiscita*—The plural of *plebiscitum*. Here used in the sense of popular opinions or estimates.

[7] NOT THE FEW INCHES OF DEFLECTION, etc.—Read this carefully and make a diagram and the meaning will be plain. What Carlyle is saying here is that in judging a great man we should try to see his error or aberration in light of his great qualities. The great man is a great circle upon the circumference of which a little irregularity does not make the difference that it would on a small circle.

This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city hippodrome; nay the circle of a ginhorse,[8] its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are measured: and it is assumed that the diameter of the gin-horse, and that of the planet, will yield the same ratio when compared with them! Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burnses, Swifts, Rousseaus,[9] which one never listens to with approval. Granted, the ship comes into harbor with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful: but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate[10] and the Isle of Dogs.[11]

With our readers in general, with men of right feeling anywhere, we are not required to plead for Burns. In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts, in a far nobler mausoleum than that one of marble; neither will his Works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of men. While the Shakespeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves; this little Valclusa[12] Fountain will also arrest our eye: for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth, with a full gushing current, into the light of day; and often will the traveler turn aside to drink of its clear waters, and muse among its rocks and pines!

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[8] GINHORSE—A horse that turns a mill by going around in a circle, the prefix "gin" meaning a machine as in the word cotton-gin.

[9] SWIFTS, ROUSSEAUS—Jonathan Swift, see Part XIV, Note 18. Jean Jacques Rousseau, a French philosopher and novelist. Swift has often been condemned for being a bitter misanthrope and Rousseau for being unmoral. Carlyle's point is that these men have been subject to the error of judgment which he refers to in the note above.

[10] RAMSGATE—A seaport on the English channel.

[11] ISLE OF DOGS—A small peninsula on the Thames which gets its name from the fact that the king's hounds were formerly kept there.

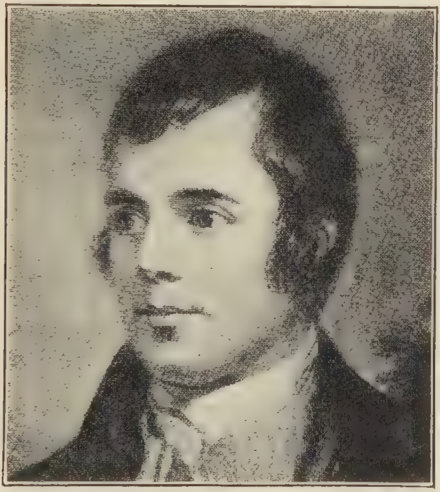
[12] VALCLUSA—Valcluse, in southeastern France. It was the home of the Italian poet, Petrarch, who here found opportunity for quiet study.

ROBERT BURNS

(1759–1796)

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE FROM HIS LETTERS AND FROM LOCKHART'S *Life of Robert Burns* *

LOCKHART begins his *Life of Burns* with the following paragraph: "Robert Burns was born on the 25th of January, 1759, in a clay-built cottage, about two miles to the south of the town of Ayr, and in the immediate vicinity of . . . the 'Auld Brig o' Doon.' About a week afterwards, part of the frail dwelling, which his father had constructed with his own hands, gave way at midnight; and the infant poet and his mother were carried through the storm, to the shelter of a neighbouring hovel."



Robert Burns

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* The purpose of this sketch is to give without comment from Burns's letters and Lockhart's *Life* the principal facts in the life of Burns which Carlyle had in mind when he wrote his critical essay on Burns's life and poems; and to give the student such information as will make Carlyle's comment meaningful. The circumstances under which the poems mentioned in the essay were composed are stated either in the footnotes or in connection with the Selected Poems.

Burns's early life is well covered in a letter written to Dr. Moore in 1787 in which he says: "I was born a very poor man's son. For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station, I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farmhouse; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye, till they could discern between good and evil; so with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate. . . . At those years, I was by no means a favourite with anybody. . . . Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. . . . The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were *The Life of Hannibal*, and *The History of Sir William Wallace*. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest. . . .

"I formed several connexions with other younkers, who possessed superior advantages; the youngling actors who were busy in the rehearsal of parts, in which they were shortly to appear on the stage of life, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. . . . Parting with these my young friends . . . as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils. My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain. . . . We lived very poorly: I was a dexterous ploughman for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert), who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. . . . This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley slave, brought me to my sixteenth year. . . . My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm [Lochlea], about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands . . . [and] for four years we lived comfortably here. . . .

"It is during the time that we lived on this farm, that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps the most ungainly, awkward boy in the parish—no *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story was gathered from . . . *Geographical Grammars;* and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from the *Spectator*. These, with Pope's *Works*, some Plays of Shakespeare . . . [and] *A Select Collection of English Songs,* had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum.* I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is. . . .

"[A] circumstance in my life which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, etc., in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were, till this time, new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. . . .

"My twenty-third year was to me an important æra. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighbouring town (Irvine), to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair . . . and to finish the whole . . . the shop took fire and burned to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence. . . .

"When my father died . . . we made a shift to collect a little money in the family amongst us, with which, to keep us together, my brother and I took a neighbouring farm [Mossgiel]. . . . I entered on this farm with a full resolution, 'come, go to, I will be wise!' I read farming books, I calculated crops; I attended markets; and in short . . . I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second from a late harvest, we lost half our crops . . . [and] this overset all my wisdom. . . .

"I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my *Holy Fair*. . . . *Holy Willie's Prayer* next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. . . .

"I gave up my part of the farm to my brother . . . and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But before leaving my native country forever, I resolved to publish my poems. . . . I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. . . . I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia—'The gloomy night is gathering fast,' when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition. The doctor belonged to a set of critics for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion, that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. . . . At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to 'catch' the characters and 'the manners living as they rise.' "

"It needs no effort of imagination," says Lockhart, "to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested, in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation, a most thorough conviction, that, in the society of the most eminent men of his nation, he was exactly where he was entitled to be. . . . The lawyers of Edinburgh, in whose wider circles Burns figured at his outset, with at least as much success as among the professional *literati*, were a very different race of men from these. . . . Among the Scotch lawyers of the time of Burns, the principle of jollity was indeed in its 'high and palmy state.' He partook largely in those tavern scenes of audacious hilarity. . . . 'He suffered himself,' says Heron, 'to be surrounded by a race of miserable beings, who were proud to tell that they had been in company with Burns, and had seen Burns as loose and as foolish as themselves. He was not yet irrecoverably lost to temperance and moderation; but he was already almost too much captivated by their wanton revels, to be ever more won back to a faithful attachment to their more sober charms.' . . .

"The second edition of Burns's poems was published early in March; . . . there were no less than 1,500 subscribers, many of whom paid more than the shop-price of the volume. . . . Burns now found himself in possession of a considerable sum of ready money; and the first impulse of his mind was to visit some of the classic scenes of Scottish history and romance. . . .

"On the 6th of May, Burns left Edinburgh to visit the picturesque scenery of the southern border, and in particular . . . the localities celebrated by the old minstrels, of whose works he was a passionate admirer. . . . Burns returned to Mauchline on the 8th of July. It is pleasing to imagine the delight with which he must have been received by his family after the absence of six months, in which his fortunes and prospects had undergone so wonderful a change. He left them comparatively unknown . . . [and] returned, his poetical fame established, the whole country ringing with his praises. . . . His appetite for wandering appears to have been only sharpened by his Border excursion" and before the end of 1787 he had toured the Highlands and the north of Scotland.

Early in 1788 he returned to Mossgiel where he married Jean Armour. "To give the rest of my story in brief," he wrote Dr. Moore, "I have married 'my Jean,' and taken a farm." This was the farm at Elliesland of which Lockhart says, "The poet was accustomed to say, that the most happy period of his life was the first winter he spent at Elliesland—for the first time under a roof of his own—with his wife and children about him—and in spite of occasional lapses into the melancholy which had haunted his youth, looking forward to a life of well-regulated, and not ill-rewarded, industry. . . .

"The 'golden days' of Elliesland . . . were not destined to be many. Burns's farming speculations once more failed; and he himself seems to have been aware that such was likely to be the case ere he had given the business many months' trial; for, ere the autumn of 1788 was over, he applied . . . for actual employment as an exciseman, and was accordingly appointed to do duty, in that capacity, in the district where his lands were situated. His income as a revenue officer was at first only £35; it by and by rose to £50; and sometimes was £70. . . . These pounds were hardly earned, since the duties of his new calling necessarily withdrew him very often from the farm, which needed his utmost attention, and exposed him, which was still worse, to innumerable temptations of the kind he was least likely to resist. . . .

"Towards the close of 1791, the poet, finally despairing of his farm, determined to give up his lease, which the kindness of his landlord rendered easy of arrangement; and procuring an appointment to the Dumfries division, . . . removed his family to the county town, in which he terminated his days. His conduct as an excise officer had hitherto met with uniform approbation; and he nourished warm hopes of being promoted, when he had thus avowedly devoted himself altogether to the service." A letter to Mr. Heron written in 1794 reveals the fact that Burns hoped for a more lucrative appointment, saying, "A life of literary leisure, with a decent competency, is the summit of my wishes."

As to the course of Burns's life in Dumfries, there seems to be a considerable difference of opinion. Says one contemporary, "He was here exposed more than in the country, to be solicited to share the riot of the dissolute and the idle. Foolish young men . . . flocked eagerly about him, and from time to time pressed him to drink with them, that they might enjoy his wicked wit." His brother Gilbert, however, and others who knew him have gone on record as saying that the reports of Burns's failings were greatly exaggerated.

There is abundant testimony that he performed his duties as an excise officer faithfully and with ability. His sympathies, however, with the French revolutionists, and an unfortunate indiscretion (See Note 9, Part XIV) seem to have lost him for a time the favor of what Carlyle calls "the Dumfries aristocracy," and to have dashed his hopes for promotion in the excise service. Burns could not endure the consequences of his political sympathies and his indiscretions—"In the face where I used to meet the kind of complacency of friendly confidence, *now* to find cold neglect and contemptuous scorn, is a wrench that my heart can ill bear." In February, 1794, we find him writing, "For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were, *ab origine,* blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these cursed times—losses which, though trifling, were yet what I could ill bear—have so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition."

From this time on Burns seems to have lived in a "Decemberish humor, gloomy, sullen, stupid." In December, 1795, he wrote Mrs. Dunlop, "These four months, a sweet little girl, my youngest child [who later died], has been so ill, that every day a week or less threatened to terminate her existence. There had much need be many pleasures annexed to the states of husband and father, for God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks; me and my exertions all their stay: and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of fate! even in all the vigour of manhood as I am—such things happen every day—gracious God! what would become of my little flock! 'Tis here that I envy your people of fortune." In the following June Burns complained of being "racked . . . with rheumatism," and in July he wrote, "For these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bed-fast and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an excruciating rheumatism, which has reduced me to nearly the last stage. You actually would not know me if you saw me. Pale, emaciated, and so feeble as occasionally to need help from my chair—my spirits fled! fled!" On medical advice Burns tried sea-bathing for his malady, but convinced that his disorder would prove fatal he returned to Dumfries in the middle of July, 1796. Here, wasted in body, his spirits fled, he awaited the end. Almost his last letter was one written to a publisher begging the loan of £5 with which to pay a haberdasher's bill. "After all my boasted independence, curst necessity," he wrote, "compels me to implore you for £5." On the morning of July 21 he died in a delirium, crying out, it is said, against the lawyer who had threatened to place him in the debtors' prison for failure to pay the haberdasher's bill. So passed Robert Burns, as Carlyle says, "not softly yet speedily, into that still country, where the hailstorms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!"

THOMAS CARLYLE

(1795–1881)

Quite as interesting as the subject of the *Essay on Burns*, is the personality of the man who wrote it—Thomas Carlyle. He, too, was a Scot, the son of a stone-mason of Ecclefechan, born in humble circumstances and acquainted with the rigors and hardships of Scotch peasant life. His judgment of Burns written in 1828 stands today after the lapse of a century the best interpretation and the most sympathetic criticism of both man and poet which has been made, yet Carlyle was in every respect the antithesis of Burns.

"Burns came upon the world as a prodigy"; Carlyle brought his genius to maturity through hard work and in the face of many obstacles. At thirty-seven Burns died, broken in body and spirit; at forty Carlyle had just completed his apprenticeship, and was entering upon another forty-five years of life and creative labor. Burns all his life "boasted independence" but on his deathbed "curst necessity" compelled him to implore the loan of £5; Carlyle at thirty-two had learned "how mad it is to hope for contentment for our infinite souls from the gifts of this extremely finite world; that a man must be sufficient for himself," and that "Manhood begins when we have, in any way made a truce with Necessity . . . and thus, in reality, triumphed over it and felt that in Necessity we are free." Burns's temperament was that of the true poet to whom the experience of living was all in all; Carlyle, on the contrary, was the philosopher whose attention was concentrated on the meaning and significance of life. Burns looked to the Excise for an income which would give him a life of "literary leisure"; Carlyle refused an annuity of £100 which would have been sufficient to his needs, for he "could not for a moment" dream of accepting such "help from any fellow mortal." Burns's republican sympathies, one suspects flowed from his desire for equality with those patricians whose way of life he professed to despise; to Carlyle "Republican equality" was the "silent fixed law of human society . . . each man to live on his own resources."

The facts of Carlyle's life are less spectacular than those of Burns. Of his father he has left us a vivid picture in his *Reminiscences*. The elder Carlyle, we are told, was a man of largest natural endowment, of rigid, scrupulous veracity, and of placid indifference to the clamours of public opinion. "All his strength," says the son, "came from God and ever sought nourishment there." Against the advice of his peasant neighbours, who held that to educate a boy was to make him despise his parents, Carlyle's father "from his small hard-earned income sent [him] to school and college." His mother, who taught him reading, and for whose care of his "body and soul" he owed "endless gratitude" was of "the fairest descent, that of the pious, the just, and the wise." Froud says that she learned to write after Thomas had gone to Edinburgh, that she might correspond with her son.

Carlyle's schooling was received at the Annan Grammar School and at the University of Edinburgh, to enter which he walked a hundred miles. After his college work was finished he turned his attention to the ministry, to law, and to teaching, but none of these satisfied him. At length he adopted literature as his profession and returned to Mainhill, his father's home, where, according to Froud, "he first learned German, studied *Faust* in a dry ditch, and completed his translation of *Wilhelm Meister*."

Carlyle's translations from German literature gradually won recognition. In 1824 he received the first of his letters from the great German poet, Goethe, thanking him for his translation of the *Life of Schiller*. Carlyle's income, though now slender, enabled him to marry, and in 1826 he was married to Miss Jane Welsh. His wife was the owner of a small estate, Craigenputtock, near Dumfries. Here Carlyle settled down to a life of rigid frugality and devoted his time to literature. It was here that Carlyle wrote his *Essay on Burns,* and completed his first great book *Sartor Resartus,* for which he had great difficulty in finding a publisher. In 1834 Carlyle came to the decision to remove to London.

"The six years' imprisonment on the Dumfrieshire moors," says Froud, "came to an end. To Carlyle himself they had been years of inestimable value. . . . The solitude had compelled him to digest his thoughts. . . . He had read omnivorously far and wide. His memory was a magazine of facts gathered over the whole surface of European literature and history. . . . His religious faith had gained solidity. His confidence in the soundness of his own convictions was no longer clouded with the shadow of doubt. . . . He had been tried in the furnace. Poverty, mortification, and disappointment had done their work upon him, and he had risen above them elevated, purified, and strengthened."

In London Carlyle was occupied two years in writing his *History of the French Revolution.* "This book," says his biographer, was to be "the last effort. If this failed Carlyle had resolved to give up the game, abandon literature, buy spade and rifle, and make for the backwoods of America." Carlyle's Journal gives abundant testimony to the torture which the writing of this book gave him. An entry in September, 1834, is a good example: "'French Revolution,' shapeless, dark, unmanageable. Know not this day, for example, on what side to attack it; yet *must* forward." To add to the difficulty the manuscript of the first volume which he had lent to a friend to read was burned. Carlyle says, "It was like half-sentence of death to us both, and we had to pretend to take it lightly"; but he set to work and rewrote it with a fixed resolution. The publication of this book brought him at last the long-delayed recognition and marked the beginning of economic independence.

There now followed those essays and biographies such as *Heroes and Hero Worship, Past and Present, Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches,* the *Life of John Sterling,* and the *Life of Frederick the Great* upon which Carlyle's fame securely rests.

In 1866, "as by a thunderbolt from the skies all blue" Carlyle's wife was snatched from him. In his *Reminiscences* Carlyle wrote, "and in all my life (and as I feel ever since) there fell on me no misfortune like it; which has smitten my whole world into universal wreck (unless I can repair it in some small measure), and extinguished whatever light of cheerfulness and loving hopefulness life still had in it to me." After his wife's death little came from his pen. The financial ease and the success which were now his and the honors which came to him seem all to have been robbed of their significance. Heartbroken, he lingered on until February 5, 1881. He might have been buried in Westminster Abbey, but it was his preference to lie in death in Ecclefechan Churchyard beside the mother and father whose memory he cherished to the last.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THE *ESSAY*

Part I

Is it still true that "the highest excellence" is not readily and universally recognized? Can you give examples? Why is this likely to be true? Is the inventor "pretty sure of his reward in his own day?" Base your answer upon definite instances. If a hero is none to his valet, in what respects might the valet, rather than the hero, be at fault? Do you prefer your heroes to remain "distant," or on a pedestal? Does it lessen or heighten your appreciation of their work to find them "human" with peculiarities, foibles, etc? Do moral laws and conventions, in your opinion, apply with equal force to all? Or does genius deserve, and perhaps require, a certain freedom not accorded to others less gifted? Notice Carlyle's distinction between a *Life* and a *Biography*. Does his conception of biography anticipate the practice of modern biographers?

Part II

Carlyle says of Burns: "He did much, if we consider when and how." Should that be considered in estimating performance? Why was Britain, at the time of Burns, in the "most prosaic age" it had yet seen? "His genius attained no mastery in its art," says Carlyle of Burns. Is this the general opinion? Is it yours? Outline the "tragedy" of Burns's life as Carlyle says he enacted it. Why is a true poet the "most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation?" In our own time are there any of whom this may be said? Would you say, from what you know of Burns, that he died "without ever having lived?" What, in your opinion, constitutes "living?" Does it seem unusual to you that so much emphasis is placed upon the subject matter of Burns's poetry, and upon his universal sympathy with the lowly? Can you name any modern poems that are equally democratic or universal in spirit?

Part III

Do you think that "culture, leisure, true effort, even length of life" would have insured the completeness of Burns's genius? Might his poems have been what they are even if circumstances had been greatly altered? What, according to Carlyle, is the "grand secret" for finding and entertaining readers? Do you agree? Why should a wish to be original be a deficiency in a writer? Is it not generally considered a virtue? What is Carlyle's main criticism of Byron? What two excuses does Carlyle find for the style of some of Burns's letters? Are they sufficient?

Part IV

Wherein lies the attraction of heroic ages and heroic climates? Is this as true now as when Carlyle wrote? Can you cite examples? What is the essential nature of the poet? Is Carlyle's conception of what makes up man's existence colored by his temperament? What do you think he means when he says that there is the fifth act of a tragedy in every death bed? What qualities must one possess in order to be reckoned a true poet? List the various attributes Carlyle mentions. Would you add to or subtract from this list?

Part V

List the qualities which Carlyle finds in Burns's poems. Can you find examples of these qualities in some of the poems other than those quoted by the author of the *Essay?* Are there any contemporary poets who exhibit the same, or similar, qualities? Do you agree, after a study of his poems, that "no poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns?" Is the poetic faculty, according to Carlyle, something inherent or something acquired? Are poets "born" or "made?" Do you agree with Carlyle in his estimate of Keats?

Part VI

What does Carlyle mean by the statement that "the intellectual gift of Burns is fine as well as strong?" In the quotation from Burns's letter, name the things which he declares he enjoys. Have you ever experienced a similar feeling from a similar cause? Can you describe it? Do you think of any other poets who have expressed themselves in this manner? Note the qualities in Burns's character which are mentioned. How do these affect his writing?

Part VII

Does indignation ever make anything beside verses? Can you cite examples of a righteous wrath which had important results? What is Carlyle's attitude toward hate? Can love ever manifest itself as humor? Can humor ever be cruel, rather than tender? Distinguish between humor and wit; humor and caricature. Give examples drawn from your own reading and observation. What are the chief characteristics of Burns's humor?

Part VIII

How does Carlyle characterize many of Burns's poems? Is this critical judgment over harsh? Can you mention any of Burns's poems which might come under the classifications which Carlyle makes? Is Carlyle supported in his adverse criticism of *Tam O'Shanter?* What faults does he find in it? Do you agree with him? Contrast the faults of *Tam O'Shanter* with the merits of *The Jolly Beggars.*

PART IX

What does Carlyle consider the most finished, complete, and truly inspired pieces of Burns? What reasons does he give for this opinion? How does he rank Burns as a writer of songs? What qualities does he find in Burns's songs? From what he says of Burns's songs, what can you infer of the nature of a song? Is Fletcher's aphorism true to-day? If so, what do you think of the character of our present day songs—and song writers?

PART X

How did Burns affect the literature of his native land? To what had this late development of Scottish literature been due? Is there any parallel in the development of American literature? How does Carlyle regard affection for one's native land? Should this always be reflected in literature? If so, how? What effect had Sir Walter Scott on Scottish literature? Can you give instances? What was Burns's gift to his country?

PART XI

What gives Burns's poems their full measure of significance? Do you think that his achievement would have been greater had his circumstances been easier? Does "chill penury" repress one's "noble rage," or is poverty a good school in which to develop character? Explain what Carlyle means by saying that "there is but one era in the life of Burns." Is Carlyle right in thinking that contentment comes from within, rather than from without the individual? Does this seem to be the modern belief? Characterize Burns's father. Then consult *The Cottar's Saturday Night* and read the poet's portrait of him. What were the advantages of Burns's early life?

PART XII

Is it now believed that a course in dissipation is the natural preparation for manhood? Is modern youth always anxious to savor all kinds of experience? What was the effect on Burns? Why does Carlyle consider the religious quarrels of the time a "highly unprofitable warfare?" Was it unprofitable for Burns, and, if so, why? Could we have spared those poems of Burns's which this warfare inspired? Is there any parallel to this controversy in the modern scene? Is this, too, unprofitable?

Part XIII

Why was Burns invited to Edinburgh, and what did he hope from this visit? Describe him as you imagine he must have looked and acted among the celebrated company into which he was thrown. Why did this winter do him "great and lasting injury?" Why could he not "will to make a fortune?" Should he have refused to go to Edinburgh when invited? Should he have conducted himself differently while there? Should he have attempted to "cash in" upon his fame? Cite some modern instances.

Part XIV

What was Burns's next problem and how did he solve it? Does Carlyle approve? Do you? Do you agree with Carlyle that "his was no bankruptcy of the purse, but of the soul." Do great artists of the present time have to face similar problems when they plan a career in music, literature, or art? What, according to Carlyle, should have been his course at this time? How did Burns become involved in politics, and with what result? What other influence brought him lower in his own and others' estimation?

Part XV

What might have been done for Burns? How does Carlyle view these suggestions? Is it always true that "self-help is the best help?" What is Carlyle's attitude toward "patronage?" Was this attitude unusual for the times? Carlyle suggests what might have been done to help Burns. Why was it not done? Is this the universal history of the artist who is never appreciated until after it is too late? Can you give any other instances of the neglect of genius? Is this neglect still possible, or is modern society more appreciative? Upon whom does Carlyle place the chief blame for Burns's failure? Do you agree? As compared with its treatment of other great men, how do you think the world treated Burns?

Part XVI

Is it true that a life is seldom wrecked except by itself? What is Carlyle's view of the influence of external circumstances? Is this view now universally held? What two irreconcilable elements would not mingle in Burns? What did Burns lack that enabled other men to rise above their poverty and misfortune? What is Carlyle's opinion of

Burns's morality? His religion? His poetry? What do you infer from this regarding Carlyle's philosophy of life?

PART XVII

Does Carlyle believe that wealth makes poets, or anyone else, happy? In what were Burns and Byron alike? In what respects unlike? What, according to Carlyle, should such men do and be? What does Carlyle consider the true basis of judgment in such cases? Does he regard Burns as "guilty before the world?" Do you?

TOPICS FOR WRITTEN COMPOSITION

From the following list of quotations from Carlyle's *Essay,* write essays of your own.

I Regarding Burns himself:
1. His Sun shone as through a tropical tornado; and the pale Shadow of Death eclipsed at noon.
2. A soul like an Æolian harp, in whose strings the vulgar wind as it passed through them changed itself into articulate melody.
3. The excellence of Burns is his Sincerity.
4. No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns.
5. He rises to the high, and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all Nature.
6. By far the most finished, complete, and truly inspired pieces of Burns are to be found among his Songs.
7. The poems of Burns made a nationality.
8. There is but one era in the life of Burns—Youth.

II Regarding philosophies of life, using illustrations.
1. No man is a hero to his own valet.
2. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down with a pickaxe.
3. A poet is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation.
4. Be true, if you would be believed.
5. Nature is a grand agent in making poets.
6. The blind man "travels from Dan to Beersheba, and finds it all barren."
7. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character.

8. "Let me make the songs of a nation, and let who will make its laws."
9. The crossing of a brook decides the conquest of the world.
10. We "long for the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price."
11. The best teacher of duties is the Practice of those we see and have at hand.
12. The world is habitually unjust in its judgments of great men.
13. No man can do anything by halves.

SOME TESTS ON THE *ESSAY*

The following new-type tests will be found useful for reviewing the salient points of Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*. They are not intended as examinations, but may be used either as class or individual exercises. The interest of both teacher and pupils will find many ways to make them serviceable. Others of the same general type may be constructed by teacher and pupils. In fact, the making of such tests is a very useful and interesting exercise.

In taking the tests, the books should not be marked. Often such tests may be administered orally. Where they are written, it will often be sufficient to indicate the answer after the number of the question. In the case of the completion questions, it will probably be necessary to copy the entire statement.

Completion Statements

Either orally or on paper fill in the blanks in the following statements with the appropriate words:

1. Burns's failure to achieve his potentialities was due to ——.
2. The excellence of Burns's poetry lies chiefly in its ——.
3. Burns found plenty of subjects for poetry in his own —— ——.
4. Carlyle believes that all true help comes ultimately from ——.
5. The true poet is never at a loss for ——.
6. "The poet must have an —— to —— these things, and a —— to —— them."
7. Burns's chief lack was —— of ——.
8. Within Burns warred two purposes: (1) his ——; (2) his desire for —— ——.
9. Carlyle believes that Burns's chief influence as a poet will ultimately be found to depend on his ——.

10. Burns's poetry contains: ——, ——, and —— pathos.

11. "A remarkable increase of ——" has marked Scottish literature since the period of Burns.

12. Previous to Burns, Scotland's culture was almost exclusively ——.

13. "There is but one era in the life of Burns, and that the ——."

14. "Manhood begins when we have in any way made —— with ——."

15. Burns left home to go to ——.

16. Burns's downfall was hastened by his —— friends.

17. According to Carlyle the three gates of deliverance open to Burns were:

(1) —— —— ——
(2) ——
(3) ——

18. "Many a poet has been —— than Burns, but no one was ever ——."

19. According to Carlyle, the blame for Burns's failure does not lie chiefly with the ——.

20. "It is not in the power of —— ——," says Carlyle, "utterly to ruin the mind of any man."

21. The chief error of Burns lies in his attempt to reconcile the spirit of —— with the common spirit of the ——.

22. Other great men whose example Carlyle cites had two things which Burns lacked: (1) a —— —— principle of ——; (2) a —— —— in their activity.

23. Burns's morality was that of a —— man; his religion was an —— ——.

24. "He who would write —— poems must make his whole —— a —— ——."

25. "It was necessary for Burns to be at one with —— —— ——; to place what was highest in his —— highest also in his ——."

TRUE-FALSE STATEMENTS

Some of the following statements are true, and some false. On a separate sheet of paper indicate after the number of each statement whether you consider it true or false. Then verify your answers by reference to the *Essay*.

1. Robert Burns was England's greatest poet.
2. Burns's early life was spent in comfortable circumstances.
3. All that lived was of interest to Burns.
4. The enthusiasm for Burns's poetry is waning.

5. According to Carlyle Burns's poems are rarely poetry.

6. Burns wrote from direct observation and experience.

7. His poems are frequently strained, stiff, and awkward.

8. Burns wrote of heroic deeds in a heroic time.

9. Poets should write of what passes in the heart of man.

10. The poet never has far to seek for a subject.

11. It is essential that a poet be born at the psychological time.

12. The elements of all human virtues and vices exist in every individual.

13. A true poet must have the seeing eye.

14. Poetry is a separate faculty.

15. The poetic soul is simply more highly developed than the average human soul.

16. Strong understanding and strong character are generally found together.

17. In Burns, keenness of insight overbalanced fineness of feeling.

18. Burns's passions were strong, but not noble.

19. *Bruce's Address* is one of the best known of war odes.

20. *M'Pherson's Farewell* was based upon an actual incident.

21. Burns's poetry is sad, and lacks humor.

22. Few of Burns's poems are essentially melodious, aerial, and poetical.

23. Carlyle believes that *Tam O'Shanter* is not deserving of the fame so generally accorded it.

24. The most strictly "poetical poem," according to Carlyle, is *The Jolly Beggars*.

25. Burns's songs are among his feeblest works.

26. Song writing requires genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart.

27. Burns's songs are tawdry, hollow, and affected.

28. Burns has been largely responsible for the growth of nationality in Scottish literature.

29. Scottish culture before Burns was almost exclusively German in character.

30. Burns's poetry was widely imitated by the Scottish bards who followed him.

31. His adoption of domestic subjects had a real influence on the literature of his native land.

32. Burns's life was a well-planned whole.

33. He early ascertained his aim in life and successfully pursued it.

34. Burns never passed beyond the era of youth.

35. In no heart did love of country burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns.

36. To the last Burns wavers between two ambitions.

37. Burns sought for contentment in love, friendship, honor, and financial security.

38. The life of Byron shows that Burns could have accomplished much more had he been financially independent.

39. True happiness, according to Carlyle, is to be found only when one does not have to worry about his daily bread.

40. Had Burns been educated, he could have changed the whole course of British literature.

41. Burns's father was shiftless and neglectful of his family.

42. Burns's early life was unhappy and miserable.

43. Burns was anxious to go to the West Indies in order to see a little of the world.

44. One does not become a man, says Carlyle, until he has been disappointed in the pursuit of false pleasure.

45. Burns's journey to Edinburgh was far-reaching in its consequences.

46. Taking sides in the raging theological disputes of the time was very helpful to Burns's career as a poet.

47. Burns's conduct in Edinburgh is the best proof of the real vigor and integrity of his mind.

48. The winter in Edinburgh did Burns great and lasting injury.

49. Carlyle believes that Burns should have sought the patronage of the great rather than become an exciseman.

50. His true destiny, a life of poetry with poverty, was too often hidden from Burns's eyes.

SELECTED POEMS FROM BURNS

THE NATURE OF BURNS'S POETRY

Carlyle's *Essay* has treated Burns with such sympathetic insight that the student needs only to read his poems to become acquainted with this brilliant, yet pitiful figure. The selections which here accompany the *Essay* have been chosen with the thought of giving representation to Burns's work in various fields. They may readily be supplemented by reference to any complete edition of his poems.

His dialect may seem to interpose a barrier between him and the general reader. Actually, it is one of his chief charms, and may be readily mastered with little effort. It should be remembered that Burns deliberately chose it—he was not ignorant of English, as many of his poems testify—and in it he achieved his best effects. The combination of English and Lowland Scotch is for most of his subjects eminently right and fitting. When he versifies in English, he frequently becomes stiff and self-conscious. His Muse halts, instead of skipping.

On this point of language Emerson has said, "He grew up in a rural district, speaking a *patois* unintelligible to all but natives, and he has made the Lowland Scotch a Doric dialect of fame. It is the only example in history of a language made classic by the genius of a single man."

Like all Scotch peasants Burns was familiar with the ballads of the countryside, the floating treasure of folk lore which was the heritage of his race. He knew them, loved them, and redeemed them. In many the words had become degraded with popular use; in others the mistaken taste of an age of precision had overlaid their rude strength with a veneer of classical sophistication and affectation. It was like torturing the Scotch moor into clipped hedges and formal grottoes.

How well Burns perceived this may be best explained by a comparison of two versions of perhaps the best known of all the Scotch songs. The first is the version of Allan Ramsay, the second that of his self-confessed pupil, Robert Burns:

Methinks around us on each bough
  A thousand Cupids play;
Whilst through the groves I walk with you,
  Each object makes me gay.
Since your return—the sun and moon
  With brighter beams do shine,
Streams murmur soft notes while they run
  As they did lang syne.

How far the pupil surpassed the master is a point which needs no laboring.

We twa hae run about the braes
  And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wandered mony a weary foot
  Sin auld lang syne.
We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,
  Frae morning sun till dine:
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
  Sin auld lang syne.

It is only in his failures that Burns follows the fashions of the century. Elsewhere—that is, in the great body of his poetry—he is direct, simple, impassioned, lyrical. He has compared himself to the Aeolian harp, played upon by every wind of Heaven, but he, too, knows how to sweep the heart strings of human emotion. Passion of war, passion of hatred for cant and hypocrisy, passion of conviviality, above all, passion of love—these are the notes which he sounds as few others can or have.

O WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST

THIS beautiful song, combining a wild and solemn melancholy with the tenderest expression of devotion, was among the last productions of our poet. Like others of Burns's poems, it has been given an appropriate musical setting by Schubert. But it almost sings itself from the printed page alone.

O WERT thou in the cauld blast,
  On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
  I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;
Or did Misfortune's bitter storms
  Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should by my bosom,
  To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
  Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a Paradise,
  If thou wert there, if thou wert there;
Or were I Monarch o' the globe,
  Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my Crown
  Wad be my Queen, wad be my Queen.

2. LEA—Grass or pasture land; untilled land.
3. PLAIDIE—Cloak, made of the Scotch tartan or plaid.
3. AIRT—Direction, or point of the compass, from which the angry blast is coming.
7. BIELD—Shelter; refuge.

OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW

This poem is one of several songs written to Jean Armour, the poet's wife. Its unstudied simplicity, its fresh and pure emotion, and its melodious quality give it high rank as one of Burns's representative poems.

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
  I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
  The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild-woods grow, and rivers row,
  And mony a hill between:
But day and night my fancy's flight
  Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
  I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
  I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonie flower that springs,
  By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonie bird that sings,
  But minds me o' my Jean.

1. Airts—Directions; points of the compass.
3. Bonie—Blithe; beautiful.
5. Row—Roll.
14. Shaw—Wood.

THE BANKS O' DOON

The theme of the deserted lover is a very frequent one in poetry; so much so, in fact, that it became a conventional theme treated with a good deal of pose and affectation.

In this poem, however, Burns impresses us, as usual, with his sincerity. The melancholy is not assumed, and the simplicity with which the emotion is expressed adds greatly to its force.

The nature background is closely observed, and faithfully described.

Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care?
Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn!
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon
To see the rose and woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my fause luver staw my rose—
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

1. Braes—Slopes.
6. Wantons—Plays; frolics.
11. Ilka—Each; every.
15. Fause—False.
4. Fu'—Full.
9. Aft—Often.
13. Pu'd—Pulled; plucked.
15. Staw—Stole.

AULD LANG SYNE

A song of friendship which has become the universal property of mankind.

As explained elsewhere, Burns derived this song from Ramsay's version. In his hands, however, it has become a new poem, instinct with life, stripped of literary affectations, and possessed of a power to move us by recollections of real experiences.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

Title—The title means, literally, "long, long since." It is, however, practically untranslatable, as it suggests a wealth of memories clustering about a friendship of many years' growth and standing.

Chorus

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint stowp
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary fit,
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fere!
And gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak a right gude-willie waught,
For auld lang syne.

---

9. Pint stowp—A kind of jug with a handle, holding from half a pint to two quarts. The meaning is that each of the old acquaintances will take a loving cup.

13. Twa.—Two.
14. Gowans—Wild daisies.
15. Fit—Foot.
17. Paidl'd—Paddled; waded.
17. Burn—Brook; rivulet.
18. Dine—Dinner.
19. Braid—Broad.
21. Fere—Comrade.
22. Gie's—Give us.
23. Right gude-willie waught—Hearty good-will draught.

SWEET AFTON

The tender sentiment, the appropriate background of natural beauty, and a melodiousness which is readily appreciated even without its beautiful musical setting make this poem deservedly one of the most popular of Burns's songs.

The student will be interested to observe the effect gained by the meter which is here employed. The perfect union of sound and sense in many of the lines should also be noted.

Flow gently, sweet Afton! among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds, in yon thorny den,
Thou green crested lapwing thy screaming forbear,
I charge you, disturb not my slumbering Fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where, wild in the woodlands, the primroses blow;
There oft, as mild Ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;

1. Braes—Small hills.
5. Stock dove—European wild pigeon.
7. Lapwing—Plover; noted for its shrill, wailing cry.
12. Cot—Cottage; humble home.
15. Lea—Grass or pasture land; untilled land.
16. Birk—Birch.

How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As, gathering sweet flowerets, she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

19. Lave—Wash; flow against.
22. Lays—Songs.

A RED, RED ROSE

The simple, yet apt comparisons; the genuine sentiment which never borders on sentimentality; and the melody of this poem all combine to give it a high place among Burns's songs.

O my Luve's like a red, red rose,
  That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve's like the melodie,
  That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
  So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
  Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
  And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
  While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare-thee-weel, my only Luve!
  And fare-thee-weel, a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
  Tho' 'twere ten thousand mile!

8. Gang—Go.

FAREWELL SONG TO THE BANKS OF AYR

As explained in the *Essay,* Burns wrote this poem on the eve of his intended departure from Scotland. He had accepted a position as bookkeeper on a slave plantation in the West Indies. His fortunes were at low ebb, and it seemed highly unlikely that he would ever see his native land again, once he had committed himself to the desperate remedy of emigration.

His feeling of local attachment, always strong, finds fit expression in a poem, the chief value of which is autobiographical.

The gloomy night is gath'ring fast,
Loud roars the wild, inconstant blast,
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain;
The hunter now has left the moor,
The scatt'red coveys meet secure;
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The Autumn mourns her rip'ning corn
By early Winter's ravage torn;
Across her placid, azure sky,
She sees the scowling tempest fly:
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave;
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonie banks of Ayr.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar,
'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore;
Tho' death in ev'ry shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear:
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpierc'd with many a wound;
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonie banks of Ayr.

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales;
The scenes where wretched Fancy roves,
Pursuing past, unhappy loves!
Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those:
The bursting tears my heart declare—
Farewell, the bonie banks of Ayr!

25. Coila—Kyle, one of the ancient districts of Ayrshire.

HIGHLAND MARY

This poem undoubtedly is based upon personal experience. Burns was at one time betrothed to Mary Campbell. Their parting was caused by the poet's wretched economic position, and the uncertainty that he would ever be able to maintain a home, be it ever so humble.

Here Burns has again allowed his emotions to overflow into poetry of a peculiarly sincere and moving order.

Ye banks and braes and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery!
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie:
There Simmer first unfald her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last Farewell
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden Hours on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my Dearie;

1. Braes—Small hills.
4. Drumlie—Muddy; turbid. 9. Birk—Birch.

For dear to me, as light and life,
  Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
  Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
  We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
  That nipt my Flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay
  That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
  I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And clos'd for aye, the sparkling glance
  That dwalt on me sae kindly!
And mouldering now in silent dust,
  That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
  Shall live my Highland Mary.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID

Or the Rigidly Righteous

Full of faults as Burns frequently confesses himself to be, one fault was never his—lack of charity. Often needing forgiveness himself, he freely extends it to all others, except perhaps those who feel that they need it not.

The "rigidly righteous," conscious that they are "not as other men," both anger and amuse him. His "all-embracing love," which Carlyle so truly notes, cannot encompass them, for they have sinned against this very spirit of charity.

The result is a number of satires, some humorous, some savage, some merely ill-natured and grotesque caricatures. In some he has patently exceeded the bounds of good taste, and has produced merely an adolescent gesture of defiance and disrespect. In others, however, as in the following poem, he has pleaded movingly for the exercise of the great Christian virtues of love and forgiveness.

My Son, these maxims make a rule,
An' lump them aye thegither;
The Rigid Righteous *is a fool,*
The Rigid Wise *anither:*
The cleanest corn that ere was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.
Solomon.—*Eccles.* ch. vii. verse 16

O YE wha are sae guid yoursel',
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neibours' fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied wi' store o' water;
The heapèd happer's ebbing still,
An' still the clap plays clatter.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
For glaikit Folly's portals:
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences—
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

1–9. Burns's rhymed version of: "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself overwise; why shouldest thou destroy thyself?"

2. AYE THEGITHER—Always together.
5. DIGHT—Winnowed.
6. CAFF—Chaff.
8. DAFFIN'—Larking; having fun.
13. WEEL-GAUN—Well going.
15. HAPPER—Hopper.
16. CLAP—Clapper.
17. CORE—Corps.
19. DOUCE—Sober.
20. GLAIKIT—Thoughtless.
22. PROPONE—Propose.
23. DONSIE—Unlucky.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
And shudder at the niffer;
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What maks the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in;
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop!
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop!
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It maks a unco lee-way.

See Social Life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrified, they're grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
O would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences;
Or—your more dreaded hell to state,—
Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;

26. Niffer—Exchange.
28. Differ—Difference.
31. Mair than a' the lave—More than all the rest.
33. Castigated—Chastised, as with words or blows.
37. I' your tail—Favoring your voyage.
39. Baith—Both.
40. Unco lee-way—Difficult sailing.
43. Transmugrified—Transmogrified, or transformed.

A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
  A treach'rous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
  Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
  Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
  To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,—
  The moving *Why* they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
  How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
  Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
  Each spring, its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
  We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
  But know not what's resisted.

55. Lug—Ear. 56. Aiblins nae—Always near.
59. Kennin wrang—A very little wrong.

A WINTER NIGHT

Carlyle has already commented fittingly in the *Essay* on portions of this poem. "The describer *saw* this thing," he avers; "the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it." The poem bears him out.

And Burns's "all embracing love" moves him to think in the pitiless storm of the "ourie cattle," "silly sheep," and "happing bird." "This," declares Carlyle, "is the voice of Mercy herself."

It is only when Burns leaves the details which he has himself observed that he becomes chill and formal, and speaks to us in the measured accents of the eighteenth century. It will be interesting to the student to note those parts of the poem which are the results of direct observation, and which are derived from reading other authors.

When biting Boreas, fell and dour,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow'r,
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor Labour sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl;
Or, thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl:

List'ning the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle
Beneath a scaur.

Ilk happing bird,—wee, helpless thing!
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

1. Boreas—North wind. 1. Fell and dour—Keen and severe.
3. Phœbus—Apollo, the sun god. 3. Glow'r—Stare.
4. Lift—Sky. 9. Burns—Brooks with snowy wreaths choked up.
11. Bocked—Vomited. 13. Winnocks—Windows.
14. Ourie—Shivering. 15. Brattle—Noisy onset.
16. Deep-lairing, sprattle—Deep-sinking, scramble.
18. Scaur—Jutting cliff or bank of earth.
19. Ilk happing bird—Each hopping bird.
23. Chittering—Shivering.

Ev'n you, on murdering errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd
My heart forgets,
While pityless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats!

Now Phoebe in her midnight reign,
Dark-muffl'd, view'd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow, solemn, stole—

"Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness unrelenting,
Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
Than heaven-illumin'd Man on brother Man bestows!
See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, Want, and Murder o'er a land!
Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper'd Luxury, Flatt'ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud Property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple, rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show—

37–43. Is this an echo of a Shakespearean song?

51. PARASITE—Here one who eats at the table of another, making payment with flattery.

A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin'd—
Plac'd for her lordly use, thus far, thus vile, below!
Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly Honour's lofty brow,
The pow'rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone!
Mark maiden-innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares:
This boasted Honour turns away,
Shunning soft Pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears and unavailing pray'rs!
Perhaps this hour, in Misery's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

"Oh ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill-satisfy'd keen nature's clamorous call,
Stretch'd on his straw, he lays himself to sleep;
While through the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill, o'er his slumbers, piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where Guilt and poor Misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view,
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushèd low
By cruel Fortune's undeservèd blow?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress;
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

---

59. THROE—Emotion.
63. HARBOUR—Entertain.
74. WANT—Need.
83. GUILT—Object of the verb "view."

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.
But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
Thro' all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

89. Chanticleer—"The bird of dawning."
90. Pouthery—Powdery.

M'PHERSON'S FAREWELL

This is an excellent example of Burns's ability to endow the folk song or ballad with literary quality, while at the same time preserving the force, directness, and dramatic qualities of the original. The crudities incident to popular authorship are stripped away, and the ballad emerges in all its native strength and vigor.

M'Pherson was an outlaw who was condemned to die upon the gallows. The poem is presumed to be his own utterance, except for the chorus. See Note 12, Part VII, of the *Essay*.

Farewell, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie!
M'Pherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows-tree.

Chorus

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danc'd it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

6. Gaed—Went.
7. Spring—Lively tune; dance.

O what is death but parting breath?
  On many a bloody plain
I've dared his face, and in this place
  I scorn him yet again!

Untie these bands from off my hands,
  And bring to me my sword;
And there's no a man in all Scotland,
  But I'll brave him at a word.

I've liv'd a life of sturt and strife;
  I die by treacherie:
It burns my heart I must depart,
  And not avengèd be.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
  And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame disdain his name,
  The wretch that dare not die!

---

16. Brave him at a word—Fight upon being challenged.
17. Sturt—Trouble.

BANNOCKBURN

Robert Bruce's Address to His Army

The circumstances under which this soul-stirring hymn of patriotism was composed have been alluded to by Carlyle in the *Essay*. Certainly Burns has here abundantly realized his perpetually quoted wish—

> "That I for poor auld Scotland's sake
> Some useful plan or book could make,
> Or sing a sang at least."

And Carlyle's judgment, not always faultless, must be concurred in when he says: "So long as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotchman or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war-ode, the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen."

The battle of Bannockburn (so called because its field was traversed by the brook, or burn, of Bannock) was fought on June 24, 1314, and proved an overwhelming victory for the Scots under the leadership of Robert Bruce, who, although crowned king of Scotland nine years earlier, had spent the interval in fruitless attempts to establish his kingdom.

Sir William Wallace had raised the standard of Scottish independence in 1206, and had rallied the commons against the English invader. He was defeated, captured, and executed in London in August, 1305.

To this popular cause Bruce was a tardy adherent. Crowned king of Scotland at Scone in 1306, he suffered defeat, excommunication, and exile until after the death of Edward I of England. The new king, Edward II, failed to prosecute the war with necessary vigor, and the advantage passed to Bruce who, with true military genius, made the most of it. Successful raids and sieges preceded Bannockburn, but this battle was so decisive that it freed Scotland, and established its independence, although this was not formally recognized until 1328, when, by the treaty of Northampton, it was agreed that, "Scotland, according to its ancient bounds in the days of Alexander III, should remain to Robert, king of Scots, and his heirs free and divided from England, without any subjection, servitude, claim or demand whatsoever."

Before Bannockburn Bruce had told his Scottish pikemen, and told them truly, that they fought for their country, their wives, their children, and all that freemen hold dear. And in 1320, Pope John, who had excommunicated Bruce, was addressed by a Scottish parliament in a letter which declared that Bruce had wrought the salvation of his people, and which further averred that they fought "not for glory, truth or honour, but for that liberty which no virtuous man will survive."

It is that spirit, still white-hot after over four hundred years, that Burns has poured into the enduring mold of this battle hymn of independence.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
        Or to Victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
        Chains and Slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a Slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha, for Scotland's King and Law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa',
Let him on wi' me!

By Oppression's woes and pains!
By your Sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud Usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!—
Let us Do or Die!

TO A MOUSE

On Turning Her Up in Her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785

Only from a heart full of tenderness for the weak and defenceless could have come the following poem. It is instinct with genuine and unforced feeling which shows Burns at one with every manifestation of Nature.

The oft quoted moral is not lugged in for effect, but is a charming and appropriate part of the whole. Of its kind it is perfect.

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!

1. Sleekit—Sleek. 4. Bickering brattle—Hurrying scamper.

I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
It's silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An 'weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell—
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

---

5. Laith—Loath.
6. Pattle—Plough staff.
15. Daimen icker—Occasional ear of corn.
15. Thrave—Twenty-four sheaves of corn.
17. Lave—Remainder.
20. Wa's—Walls.
21. Big—Build.
22. Foggage—Coarse.
24. Snell—Bitter.
29. Coulter—Plough share.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

31. Stibble—Stubble.
34. Hald—Abiding place.
35. Thole—Endure.
35. Dribble—Drizzle.
36. Cranreuch—Hoar frost.
37. Thy lane—Alone.
40. Gang aft agley—Go oft askew.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

On Turning One Down with the Plough, in April, 1786

Only a Burns could have written the following poem. It gives us the feeling that he paused beside the furrow, and with artless ease uttered it then and there. Not even Wordsworth gives us such a feeling of comradeship with Nature as does this ploughboy when he muses on the fate of this "meanest flower that blows."

It is only when he attempts to become philosophical that his sure touch falters. There he is out of his element. But the final stanza exhibits the insight of both poet and prophet.

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stour
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewey weet,
Wi' spreckl'd breast!
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

3. Stour—Dust.
20. Wa's—Walls.
21. Bield—Shelter.
9. Weet—Wet.
20. Maun—Must.
23. Histie—Bare.

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust;
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink;
Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

The latter part of the eighteenth century, characterized by Carlyle as an age "the most prosaic which Britain had yet seen," was nevertheless to witness the beginnings of a movement, both in literature and politics, which was to exalt the individual, extend him privileges which had heretofore been the exclusive prerogative of the favored few, and present him "in his habit as he lived."

From this movement Burns drew inspiration, and to it he gave added impetus.

He was profoundly affected by the revolutionary doctrines which laid the foundation of American independence and which produced the revolt against privilege in France. In turn, his pictures of simple rustic life, honestly and faithfully presented, and his assertion of the worth of the common, unregarded peasant make him the champion and prophet of the democracy which is slowly, but surely coming into its own

Is there for honest Poverty
  That hings his head, an' a' that;
The coward slave—we pass him by,
  We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
  Our toils obscure an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
  The Man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
  Wear hoddin greay, an' a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
  A Man's a Man for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
  Their tinsel show, an' a' that;
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
  Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord,
  Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
  He's but a coof for a' that:

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2. Hings—Hangs.
7. Guinea—An English gold coin worth about $5.11.
8. Gowd—Gold. Burns meant that it is the gold, not the mark, or stamp, which makes the coin valuable.
9. Hamely—Common; coarse.
10. Hoddin greay—Coarse grey woolen.
17. Birkie—Conceited fellow.
20. Coof—Dull fellow; dolt; ninny.

For a' that, an' a' that,
  His ribband, star, an' a' that:
The man o' independent mind
  He looks an' laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
  A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
  Gude faith, he maunna fa' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
  Their dignities an' a' that;
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
  Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
  (As come it will for a' that,)
That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth,
  Shall bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
  It's coming yet for a' that,
That Man to Man, the world o'er,
  Shall brothers be for a' that.

22. Ribband, star—Symbols of orders of nobility.
27. Aboon—Above.
28. Maunna fa'—Must not claim that.
36. Bear the gree—Have the first place.

SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA

EDMUND BURKE

SECTION VI

SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA

Edmund Burke

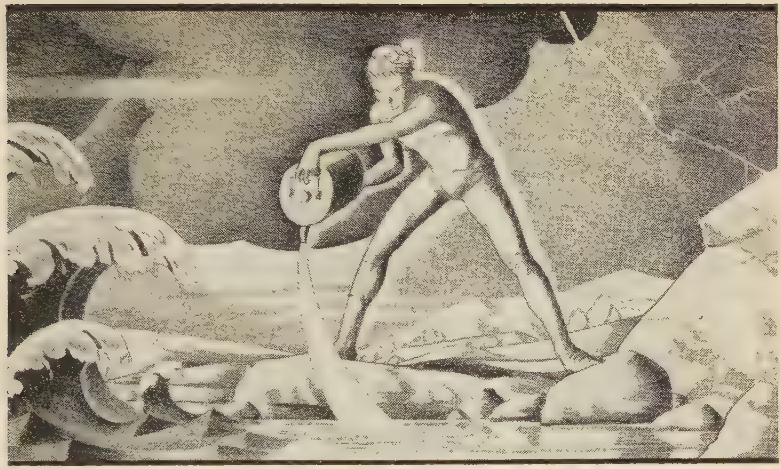
The Speech

Unit

I The Introduction (Paragraphs 1–14) 581
II The First Argument in Support of the First Capital Leading Question—England Ought to Concede (Paragraphs 15–30) 591
III The Second Argument (Paragraphs 31–36) 600
IV The Third Argument (Paragraphs 37–44) 602
V The Fourth Argument (Paragraphs 45–46) 610
VI The Fifth Argument (Paragraphs 47–64) 613
VII Six Arguments in Support of the Second Capital Leading Question—What the Concession Ought to Be (Paragraphs 65–87) 623
VIII The Seventh Argument (Paragraphs 88–121) 638
IX Two Additional Arguments (Paragraphs 122–135) 657
X The Conclusion (Paragraphs 136–139) 664

The Life of Edmund Burke 669
Why Read Burke's *Speech?* 674
How to Read Burke's *Speech* 675
The Historical Background of Burke's *Speech* 676

Comment and Study Suggestions 689
I (Paragraphs 1–14) 681
II (Paragraphs 15–30) 693
III (Paragraphs 31–36) 694
IV (Paragraphs 37–44)
V (Paragraphs 45–46) 697
VI (Paragraphs 47–64) 690
VII (Paragraphs 65–87) 691
VIII (Paragraphs 88–121) 700
IX (Paragraphs 122–135) 705
X (Paragraphs 136–139) 707



SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA

Edmund Burke

Unit I

1–14. *The Introduction. Burke gives his reason for speaking, reviews the history of the question, states his proposition and defines it, sets forth the respects in which he agrees with his opponents and those in which he differs from them, tells what he intends to prove, and states the issues.*

1. I hope, Sir,[1] that notwithstanding the austerity of the Chair,[2]

Note: Following the *Speech* will be found a section entitled *Comment and Study Suggestions.* This section is divided into paragraphs to correspond to those in the speech, and should be studied as the *Speech* is read. *The Historical Background* should be read before work on the speech is begun.

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[1] Sir—Burke's speech was addressed nominally to the Speaker of the House, Sir Fletcher Norton.

[2] Austerity of the Chair—Burke refers to the austere, or rigid, impartiality which the Chair, or Speaker, in such a body as the House of Commons must exercise in recognizing speakers and controlling debate. Burke implies

your good nature will incline you to some degree of indulgence towards human frailty. You will not think it unnatural that those who have an object depending, which strongly engages their hopes and fears should be somewhat inclined to superstition. As I came into the House, full of anxiety about the event[3] of my motion,[4] I found, to my infinite surprise,[5] that the grand penal bill[6] by which we had passed sentence on the trade and sustenance of America[7] is to be returned to us from the other House. I do confess, I could not help looking on this event as a fortunate omen. I look upon it as a sort of providential favor by which we are put once more in possession of our deliberative capacity,[8] upon a business so very questionable in its nature, so very uncertain in its issue. By the return of this bill, which seemed to have taken its flight forever, we are at this very instant nearly as free to choose a plan for our American government as we were on the first day of the session.[9] If, Sir, we incline to the side of conciliation, we are not at all embarrassed (unless we please to make ourselves so) by any incongruous[10]

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that the Speaker must, of course, never let his personal likes or dislikes influence him in giving a Member the privileges of the floor; yet he hopes that the Speaker, notwithstanding, will permit him to go on with his speech. Burke says in effect that the Speaker must understand human nature well enough to know that one who is full of hopes and fears about a matter should naturally wish to speak about it. This remark would seem to have been but a polite gesture on Burke's part, for there was no rule limiting the length of a speech in the Commons.

[3] EVENT—Outcome. Burke implies that he had intended to offer his motion at this time. See Note 5 below.

[4] MOTION—The motion or set of motions offered by Burke at the end of his speech.

[5] INFINITE SURPRISE—Burke pretends that he is surprised to find that the Lords have returned the "grand penal bill." He knew that it was being returned, and he came prepared to speak. His surprise was apparently pretended for rhetorical effect.

[6] GRAND PENAL BILL—See the section *How to Read Burke's Speech.*

[7] PASSED SENTENCE ON THE TRADE AND SUSTENANCE OF AMERICA—Burke held that Lord North's bill would destroy the commerce of the colonies, impoverish them, and make it impossible for them to pay their debts to the merchants and manufacturers of England.

[8] PUT ONCE MORE IN POSSESSION OF OUR DELIBERATIVE CAPACITY—That is, given another opportunity to consider the whole matter. See the following sentence.

[9] FIRST DAY OF THE SESSION—The first day or opening day of Parliament.

[10] INCONGRUOUS—Conflicting, inconsistent.

mixture of coercion and restraint.[11] We are therefore called upon, as it were by a superior warning voice, again to attend to America; to attend to the whole of it together; and to review the subject with an unusual degree of care and calmness.

2. Surely it is an awful[12] subject, or there is none so on this side of the grave. When I first had the honor of a seat[13] in this House, the affairs of that continent[14] pressed themselves upon us as the most important and most delicate[15] object of parliamentary attention. My little share in this great deliberation oppressed me. I found myself a partaker in a very high trust;[16] and having no sort of reason to rely on the strength of my natural abilities for the proper execution of that trust, I was obliged to take more than common pains to instruct myself in everything which relates to our colonies. I was not less under the necessity of forming some fixed ideas concerning the general policy of the British Empire. Something of this sort seemed to be indispensable, in order, amidst so vast a fluctuation of passions and opinions, to concentre my thoughts, to ballast my conduct, to preserve me from being blown about by every wind of fashionable doctrine. I really did not think it safe or manly to have fresh principles to seek upon every fresh mail which should arrive from America.

3. At that period[17] I had the fortune to find myself in perfect concurrence[18] with a large majority in this House. Bowing under that high authority, and penetrated with the sharpness and strength of that early impression, I have continued ever

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[11] MIXTURE OF COERCION AND RESTRAINT—This is an allusion to Lord North's plan which he entitled *Propositions for Conciliating the Differences with America.* By the expression "incongruous mixture of coercion and restraint" Burke perhaps alludes to the fact that, although North's plan seemed to leave the colonies free (without restraint) to tax themselves, it was at the botton a plan to force the colonies to pay. North's plan is explained in *The Historical Background of Burke's Speech.*

[12] AWFUL—Is this word used correctly?

[13] FIRST HAD THE HONOR OF A SEAT—Burke entered Parliament in 1766.

[14] THAT CONTINENT—America. [15] DELICATE—Requiring skillful handling.

[16] HIGH TRUST—Burke held that government was a trust, and that all concerned in government were the "trustees of the people."

[17] AT THAT PERIOD—1766. The Whigs were then in a majority. It was this Parliament which repealed the Stamp Act. [18] CONCURRENCE—Agreement.

since, without the least deviation, in my original sentiments. Whether this be owing to an obstinate perseverance in error, or to a religious adherence to what appears to me truth and reason, it is in your equity[19] to judge.

4. Sir, Parliament having an enlarged view of objects, made, during this interval, more frequent changes[20] in their sentiments and their conduct than could be justified in a particular person upon the contracted scale of private information. But though I do not hazard anything approaching to a censure on the motives of former Parliaments to all those alterations, one fact is undoubted,—that under them the state of America has been kept in continual agitation. Everything administered as remedy to the public complaint,[21] if it did not produce, was at least followed by, an heightening of the distemper; until by a variety of experiments that important country has been brought into her present situation—a situation which I will not miscall, which I dare not name, which I scarcely know how to comprehend in the terms of any description.

5. In this posture,[22] Sir, things stood at the beginning of the session. About that time a worthy member,[23] of great parliamentary experience, who in the year 1766 filled the Chair of the American Committee[24] with much ability, took me aside and, lamenting the present aspect of our politics, told me things were come to such a pass that our former methods[25] of proceed-

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[19] EQUITY—Impartiality.

[20] MADE MORE FREQUENT CHANGES—See *The Historical Background of Burke's Speech.*

[21] COMPLAINT—Disease.

[22] POSTURE—Position.

[23] A WORTHY MEMBER—Mr. Rose Fuller, a member of Burke's party who held ideas on America similar to Burke's.

[24] FILLED THE CHAIR OF THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE—Sat as chairman when the House of Commons went into session as a committee of the whole on American affairs.

[25] OUR FORMER METHODS—The party to which Burke belonged lost control of Parliament in 1767 and was thereafter the minority or opposition party. Under the Parliamentary system of government, the party in power is known as "the Government." It is not usual for "the Opposition," or minority party, to introduce, or initiate, legislation. The whole duty of the Opposition is to oppose. Burke gives as a reason for bringing forward his motion public dissatisfaction with the minority for doing nothing but find fault with the measures of the Government.

ing in the House would be no longer tolerated; that the public tribunal[26] (never too indulgent to a long and unsuccessful opposition) would now scrutinize our conduct with unusual severity; that the very vicissitudes[27] and shiftings of ministerial measures, instead of convicting their authors[28] of inconstancy and want of system, would be taken as an occasion of charging us with a predetermined discontent which nothing could satisfy, whilst we accused every measure of vigor as cruel, and every proposal of lenity as weak and irresolute. The public, he said, would not have patience to see us play the game out with our adversaries; we must produce our hand:[29] it would be expected that those who for many years had been active in such affairs should show that they had formed some clear and decided idea of the principles of colony government; and were capable of drawing out something like a platform of the ground which might be laid for future and permanent tranquillity.

6. I felt the truth of what my honorable friend represented; but I felt my situation too. His application might have been made with far greater propriety to many other gentlemen. No man was indeed ever better disposed, or worse qualified, for such an undertaking than myself. Though I gave so far into his opinion that I immediately threw my thoughts into a sort of parliamentary form,[30] I was by no means equally ready to produce them. It generally argues some degree of natural impotence[31] of mind, or some want of knowledge of the world, to hazard plans of government, except from a seat of authority. Propositions are made, not only ineffectually, but somewhat disreputably,[32] when the minds of men are not properly disposed for their reception; and for my part, I am not ambitious of ridicule, not absolutely a candidate for disgrace.

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[26] PUBLIC TRIBUNAL—That is, public opinion.

[27] VICISSITUDES—Changes.

[28] THEIR AUTHORS—The Ministers of the Crown.

[29] PRODUCE OUR HAND—That is, bring forward a policy.

[30] INTO A SORT OF PARLIAMENTARY FORM—That is, incorporated his ideas on the American question in definite resolutions to place before Parliament.

[31] IMPOTENCE—Weakness.

[32] DISREPUTABLY—That is, to the discredit of those who make them.

7. Besides, Sir, to speak the plain truth, I have in general no very exalted opinion of the virtue of paper government, nor of any politics in which the plan is to be wholly separated from the execution.[33] But when I saw that anger and violence prevailed every day more and more, and that things were hastening towards an incurable alienation[34] of our colonies, I confess my caution gave way. I felt this as one of those few moments in which decorum[35] yields to an higher duty. Public calamity is a mighty leveller; and there are occasions when any, even the slightest, chance of doing good must be laid hold on, even by the most inconsiderable person.

8. To restore order and repose to an empire so great and so distracted as ours, is, merely in the attempt, an undertaking that would ennoble the flights of the highest genius and obtain pardon for the efforts of the meanest understanding. Struggling a good while with these thoughts, by degrees I felt myself more firm. I derived, at length, some confidence from what in other circumstances usually produces timidity. I grew less anxious, even from the idea of my own insignificance. For judging of what you are by what you ought to be, I persuaded myself that you would not reject a reasonable proposition, because it had nothing but its reason to recommend it. On the other hand, being totally destitute of all shadow of influence, natural[36] or adventitious,[37] I was very sure that if my proposition were futile or dangerous, if it were weakly conceived or improperly timed, there was nothing exterior to it, of power to awe, dazzle or delude you. You will see it just as it is, and you will treat it just as it deserves.

9. The proposition is peace. Not peace through the medium of war; not peace to be hunted through the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations; not peace to arise out of universal discord fomented from principle[38] in all parts of the empire; not

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[33] IN WHICH THE PLAN IS TO BE WHOLLY SEPARATED FROM THE EXECUTION—In which the plan is made without taking into consideration the practical conditions under which it must be carried out.

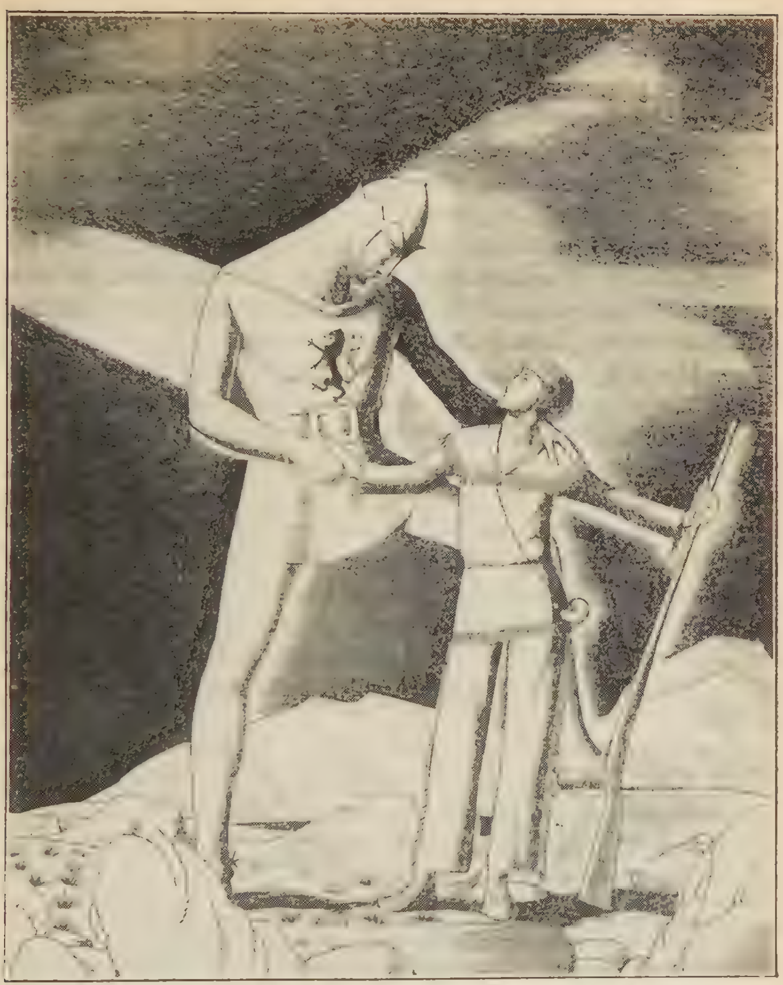
[34] ALIENATION—Estrangement.

[35] DECORUM—Propriety, becomingness.

[36] NATURAL—Resulting from the power of personality, innate.

[37] ADVENTITIOUS—Resulting from something outside, as wealth, prestige.

[38] FOMENTED FROM PRINCIPLE—The reference here is to Lord North's plan.



The proposition is peace. Not peace through the medium of war; . . .
It is simple peace, sought in its natural course and in its ordinary haunts.

peace to depend on the juridical determination[39] of perplexing questions, or the precise marking the shadowy boundaries[40] of a complex government. It is simple peace, sought in its natural course and its ordinary haunts. It is peace sought in the spirit of peace, and laid in principles purely pacific.[41] I propose, by removing the ground of the difference, and by restoring the *former unsuspecting confidence*[42] *of the colonies in the mother country,* to give permanent satisfaction to your people; and (far from a scheme of ruling by discord) to reconcile them to each other in the same act and by the bond of the very same interest which reconciles them to British government.

10. My idea is nothing more. Refined[43] policy ever has been the parent of confusion; and ever will be so, as long as the world endures. Plain good intention, which is as easily discovered at the first view as fraud is surely detected at last, is, let me say, of no mean[44] force in the government of mankind. Genuine simplicity of heart is an healing and cementing principle. My plan, therefore, being formed upon the most simple grounds imaginable, may disappoint some people when they hear it. It has nothing to recommend it to the pruriency of curious ears.[45] There is nothing at all new and captivating in it. It has nothing of the splendor of the project[46] which has been lately laid upon

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North proposed that whenever any colony should contribute its share toward maintaining its civil government and toward the common defense, it should be exempted from Parliamentary taxation. This seemed to Burke but an attempt to put into effect the principle of "divide and rule." He looked upon it as a plan to set the colonies at odds one with another, by extending favors to those who would desert the common cause and make the contributions set by Parliament. Once the colonies were divided by jealousies (by "discord") it would be an easy matter to deal with each alone.

[39] JURIDICAL DETERMINATION—Determination by process of law.

[40] BOUNDARIES—Boundaries in the sense of limits of power.

[41] PACIFIC—Peaceful.

[42] FORMER UNSUSPECTING CONFIDENCE—The confidence which the colonies had reposed in England before the Stamp Act and similar legislation had made them suspicious of the motives of the mother country.

[43] REFINED—Fine-spun, complicated.

[44] MEAN—Insignificant.

[45] TO THE PRURIENCY OF CURIOUS EARS—To those whose desire is simply to hear some "new and captivating" thing.

[46] PROJECT—The legislation introduced by Lord North explained in Note 38 above.

your table by the noble lord in the blue ribbon.[47] It does not propose to fill your lobby [48] with squabbling colony agents, who will require the interposition of your mace [49] at every instant to keep the peace amongst them. It does not institute a magnificent auction of finance, where captivated provinces come to general ransom by bidding against each other, until you knock down the hammer, and determine a proportion of payments beyond all the powers of algebra to equalize and settle.

11. The plan which I shall presume to suggest derives, however, one great advantage from the proposition and registry of that noble lord's project. The idea of conciliation is admissible. First, the House, in accepting the resolution moved by the noble lord,[50] has admitted, notwithstanding the menacing front of our address,[51] notwithstanding our heavy bill of pains [52] and penalties, that we do not think ourselves precluded from all ideas of free grace and bounty.

12. The House has gone farther: it has declared conciliation admissible, *previous* to any submission on the part of America. It has even shot a good deal beyond that mark, and has admitted that the complaints of our former mode of exerting the right of taxation were not wholly unfounded. That right thus exerted is allowed to have had something reprehensible in it, something unwise or something grievous; since, in the midst of our heat

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[47] Noble lord in the blue ribbon—Lord North. The blue ribbon refers to the insignia of a Knight of the Garter, to which order North belonged.

[48] Lobby—The lobby of the House of Commons. Colony agents, not being permitted on the floor of the House, would be obliged to transact their business with individual members of the House in the lobby. Many of the colonies maintained agents in London to look after their interests. Burke was himself agent for New York, as Franklin was for Pennsylvania. The colonies not being represented in Parliament were obliged to employ "lobbyists" to protect their interests.

[49] Mace—Authority. The mace is a kind of staff borne by the sergeant-at-arms of the House as a symbol of authority.

[50] Resolution moved by the noble lord—Lord North's resolutions were entitled *Propositions for Conciliating the Differences with America.*

[51] Menacing front of our address—The threatening aspect of our address. The reference is to an address to the King from the Lords and Commons in which the latter besought his Majesty to "take the most effectual measures to enforce due obedience" on the part of the American colonies.

[52] Pains—Punishments.

and resentment, we of ourselves have proposed a capital[53] alteration; and, in order to get rid of what seemed so very exceptionable, have instituted a mode that is altogether new,—one that is, indeed, wholly alien from all the ancient methods and forms of Parliament.

13. The *principle* of this proceeding[54] is large enough for my purpose. The means proposed by the noble lord for carrying his ideas into execution, I think, indeed, are very indifferently suited to the end; and this I shall endeavor to show you before I sit down. But, for the present, I take my ground on the admitted principle. I mean to give peace. Peace implies reconciliation; and where there has been a material dispute, reconciliation does in a manner always imply concession on the one part or on the other. In this state of things I make no difficulty in affirming that the proposal ought to originate from us. Great and acknowledged force is not impaired, either in effect or in opinion, by an unwillingness to exert itself. The superior power may offer peace with honor and with safety. Such an offer from such a power will be attributed to magnanimity. But the concessions of the weak are the concessions of fear. When such a one is disarmed, he is wholly at the mercy of his superior; and he loses forever that time and those chances which, as they happen to all men, are the strength and resources of all inferior power.

14. The capital leading questions on which you must this day decide are these two: first, whether you ought to concede; and secondly, what your concession ought to be. On the first of these questions we have gained (as I have just taken the liberty of observing to you) some ground. But I am sensible that a good deal more is still to be done. Indeed, Sir, to enable us to determine both on the one and the other of these great questions with a firm and precise judgment, I think it may be necessary to consider distinctly the true nature and the peculiar circumstances of the object which we have before us: because after all our struggle, whether we will or not, we must govern

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[53] CAPITAL—Of fundamental importance.

[54] THE *principle* OF THIS PROCEEDING—The principle of conciliation.

America according to that nature and to those circumstances, and not according to our own imaginations, not according to abstract ideas of right; by no means according to mere general theories of government, the resort to which appears to me in our present situation no better than arrant trifling. I shall therefore endeavor, with your leave, to lay before you some of the most material of these circumstances in as full and as clear a manner as I am able to state them.

Unit II

15–64. *Burke's five arguments in support of the first "capital leading question"—England ought to concede.*

15–30. *The first argument—that the nature and circumstances of America demand concession. Four aspects of America laid open.*

15. The first thing that we have to consider with regard to the nature of the object is the number of people in the colonies. I have taken for some years a good deal of pains on that point. I can by no calculation justify myself in placing the number below two millions of inhabitants of our own European blood and color; besides at least 500,000 others,[1] who form no inconsiderable part of the strength and opulence of the whole. This, Sir, is, I believe, about the true number. There is no occasion to exaggerate where plain truth is of so much weight and importance. But whether I put the present numbers too high or too low is a matter of little moment.[2] Such is the strength with which population shoots in that part of the world, that, state the numbers as high as we will, whilst the dispute continues, the exaggeration ends. Whilst we are discussing any given magnitude, they are grown to it. Whilst we spend our time in deliberating on the mode of governing two millions, we shall find we have millions more to manage. Your children do not grow faster from infancy to manhood than they spread from families to communities, and from villages to nations.

[1] 500,000 OTHERS—Negroes.

[2] MOMENT—Consequence, importance.

16. I put this consideration of the present and the growing numbers in the front of our deliberation; because, Sir, this consideration will make it evident to a blunter discernment[3] than yours, that no partial, narrow, contracted, pinched, occasional[4] system will be at all suitable to such an object. It will show you that it is not to be considered as one of those *minima*[5] which are out of the eye and consideration of the law; not a paltry excrescence[6] of the state; not a mean dependent, who may be neglected with little damage and provoked with little danger. It will prove that some degree of care and caution is required in handling such an object; it will show that you ought not, in reason, to trifle with so large a mass of the interests and feelings of the human race. You could at no time do so without guilt; and be assured you will not be able to do it long with impunity.

17. But the population of this country, the great and growing population, though a very important consideration, will lose much of its weight, if not combined with other circumstances. The commerce of your colonies is out of all proportion beyond the numbers of the people. This ground of their commerce, indeed, has been trod some days ago, and with great ability, by a distinguished person[7] at your bar.[8] This gentleman, after thirty-five years,[9]—it is so long since he first appeared at the same place to plead for the commerce of Great Britain,—has come again before you to plead the same cause, without any other effect of time than that to the fire of imagination and

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[3] DISCERNMENT—Keenness or sharpness of mind.

[4] OCCASIONAL—Designed for the occasion only and not going to the bottom of the matter, makeshift.

[5] *Minima*—The allusion is to the maxim, *De minimis non curat lex,* The law takes no account of trifles.

[6] PALTRY EXCRESCENCE—Insignificant outgrowth.

[7] DISTINGUISHED PERSON—The reference is to Mr. Richard Glover, who spoke at the bar of the House March 16, 1775, in behalf of a petition from the planters of the West Indies. He discussed at some length the commerce of the American colonies.

[8] YOUR BAR—Glover, not being a member of the House, was required to speak at the "bar," which was across the entrance to the House.

[9] AFTER THIRTY-FIVE YEARS—In 1742 Glover had appeared at the bar in behalf of the merchants of London.

extent of erudition,[10] which even then marked him as one of the first literary characters of his age,[11] he has added a consummate [12] knowledge in the commercial interest of his country, formed by a long course of enlightened and discriminating experience.

18. Sir, I should be inexcusable in coming after such a person with any detail, if a great part of the members who now fill the House had not the misfortune to be absent when he appeared at your bar. Besides, Sir, I propose to take the matter at periods of time somewhat different from his. There is, if I mistake not, a point of view from whence, if you will look at this subject, it is impossible that it should not make an impression upon you.

19. I have in my hand two accounts: one a comparative state [13] of the export trade of England to its colonies, as it stood in the year 1704, and as it stood in the year 1772; the other a state of the export trade of this country to its colonies alone, as it stood in 1772, compared with the whole trade of England to all parts of the world (the colonies included) in the year 1704. They are from good vouchers: [14] the latter period from the accounts on your table; [15] the earlier from an original manuscript of Davenant, who first established the Inspector-General's [16] office, which has been even since his time so abundant a source of parliamentary information.

20. The export trade to the colonies consists of three great branches: the African, which, terminating almost wholly in the colonies,[17] must be put to the account of their commerce; the

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[10] ERUDITION—Learning.

[11] FIRST LITERARY CHARACTERS OF HIS AGE—Glover was the author of an epic much read in his day.

[12] CONSUMMATE—Perfect.

[13] A COMPARATIVE STATE—A comparative statement.

[14] FROM GOOD VOUCHERS—That is, from reliable sources or documents.

[15] ON YOUR TABLE—That is, officially made to the House.

[16] INSPECTOR-GENERAL—The Inspector-General of Exports and Imports. Davenant held this office 1705–1714.

[17] AFRICAN, WHICH, TERMINATING ALMOST WHOLLY IN THE COLONIES—Burke alludes to the so-called "triangular" trade—manufactured articles were taken to Africa and exchanged for slaves, the slaves were taken to America and exchanged for raw materials, which were taken to England to be made into manufactured articles.

West Indian; and the North American. All these are so interwoven that the attempt to separate them would tear to pieces the contexture[18] of the whole; and if not entirely destroy, would very much depreciate, the value of all the parts. I therefore consider these three denominations to be, what in effect they are, one trade.

21. The trade to the colonies, taken on the export side, at the beginning of this century, that is, in the year 1704, stood thus:—

Exports to North America and the West Indies,	£483.265
To Africa	86,665
	£569,930

22. In the year 1772, which I take as a middle year between the highest and lowest of those lately laid on your table, the account was as follows:—

To North America and the West Indies . . .	£4,791,734
To Africa	866,398
To which if you add the export trade from Scotland, which had in 1704 no existence .	364,000
	£6,022,132

23. From five hundred and odd thousand it has grown to six millions. It has increased no less than twelvefold. This is the state of the colony trade, as compared with itself at these two periods within this century; and this is matter for meditation. But this is not all. Examine my second account. See how the export trade to the colonies alone in 1772 stood in the other point of view, that is, as compared to the whole trade of England in 1704:—

The whole export trade of England, including that to the colonies, in 1704	£6,509,000
Export to the colonies alone in 1772	6,024,000
Difference	£485,000

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[18] Contexture—Structure.

24. The trade with America alone is now within less than £500,000 of being equal to what this great commercial nation, England, carried on at the beginning of this century with the whole world! If I had taken the largest year of those on your table, it would rather have exceeded. But, it will be said, is not this American trade an unnatural protuberance that has drawn the juices from the rest of the body?[19] The reverse. It is the very food that has nourished every other part into its present magnitude. Our general trade has been greatly augmented, and augmented more or less in almost every part to which it ever extended, but with this material difference: that of the six millions which in the beginning of the century constituted the whole mass of our export commerce, the colony trade was but one-twelfth part; it is now (as a part of sixteen millions) considerably more than a third of the whole. This is the relative proportion of the importance of the colonies at these two periods: and all reasoning concerning our mode of treating them must have this proportion as its basis; or it is a reasoning weak, rotten and sophistical.[20]

25. Mr. Speaker, I cannot prevail on myself to hurry over this great consideration. It is good for us to be here.[21] We stand where we have an immense view of what is, and what is past. Clouds, indeed, and darkness rest upon the future. Let us, however, before we descend from this noble eminence,[22] reflect that this growth of our national prosperity has happened within the short period of the life of man. It has happened within sixty-eight years. There are those alive whose memory might touch the two extremities. For instance, my Lord Bathurst[23] might remember all the stages of the progress. He was in 1704

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[19] AN UNNATURAL PROTUBERANCE . . . REST OF THE BODY—There was in Burke's day a feeling on the part of many that, somehow or other, the commercial prosperity of the colonies was at the expense of the mother country.

[20] SOPHISTICAL—Fallacious, yet having the appearance of being sound.

[21] IT IS GOOD FOR US TO BE HERE—See *Matthew,* xvii. 1–4.

[22] NOBLE EMINENCE—The passage from *Matthew,* xvii. 1–4 makes these expressions clear. "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart. . . . Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. . . ."

[23] LORD BATHURST—Born 1684, died 1775.

of an age at least to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough *acta parentum iam legere, et quae sit poterit cognoscere virtus.*[24] Suppose, Sir, that the angel of this auspicious[25] youth, foreseeing the many virtues which made him one of the most amiable, as he is one of the most fortunate, men of his age, had opened to him in vision, that when in the fourth generation[26] the third prince of the House of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation which (by the happy issue of moderate and healing counsels) was to be made Great Britain,[27] he should see his son, Lord Chancellor[28] of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to an higher rank of peerage,[29] whilst he[30] enriched the family with a new one;—if, amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honor and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain and unfolded the rising glories of his country, and, whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius[31] should point out to him a little speck, scarcely visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal[32] principle rather than a formed body, and should tell him,—"Young man, there is America, which at this day[33] serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners; yet shall, before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing conquests and civilizing settlements in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!" If this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity[34] of youth and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm to make him believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it! Fortunate indeed, if he lives to see nothing that shall vary the prospect and cloud the setting of his day![35]

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[24] *Acta parentum . . . cognoscere virtus*—He was able to study the deeds of his forefathers and to learn what virtue is.

[25] Auspicious—Fortunate.

[26] When in the fourth generation, etc.—This would be 1772. George III, "the third prince of the House of Brunswick," came to the throne in 1760. He was of the fourth generation, however, since he was the grandson of George II.

[27] Was to be made Great Britain—The allusion is to the Act of Union in 1707 which united England and Scotland. Great Britain includes England, Scotland and Wales, all of which are represented in the Parliament which meets at Westminster. Burke's parenthetical expression: "by the happy issue of moderate and healing counsels" alludes to the fact that the union of Scotland and England was not brought about by force of arms. Even in 1707 the Scotch people were much opposed to the union, and in order to effect the union England had to make certain concessions. Burke apparently wished to suggest that Scotland was won by conciliation.

[28] His son, Lord Chancellor—Lord Bathurst's son Henry was made Lord Chancellor in 1771.

[29] Turn back the current . . . of peerage—The allusion is to the fact that in 1772 Lord Bathurst was made an Earl.

[30] He—Refers to the son, the Lord Chancellor.

[31] The genius—The [good] angel, or guardian spirit, of this auspicious youth, referred to at the beginning of the sentence above.

[32] Seminal—Germinal.

26. Excuse me, Sir, if, turning from such thoughts, I resume this comparative view once more. You have seen it on a large scale; look at it on a small one. I will point out to your attention a particular instance of it in the single province of Pennsylvania. In the year 1704 that province called for £11,459 in value of your commodities, native and foreign. This was the whole. What did it demand in 1772? Why, nearly fifty times as much; for in that year the export to Pennsylvania was £507,909, nearly equal to the export to all the colonies together in the first period.

27. I choose, Sir, to enter into these minute and particular details; because generalities, which in all other cases are apt to heighten and raise the subject, have here a tendency to sink it. When we speak of the commerce with our colonies, fiction lags after truth, invention is unfruitful, and imagination cold and barren.

28. So far, Sir, as to the importance of the object in the view of its commerce, as concerned in the exports from England.

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[33] AT THIS DAY—That is, 1704.
[34] SANGUINE CREDULITY—That is, ready willingness to believe.
[35] SETTING OF HIS DAY—That is, the evening of his life.

If I were to detail the imports, I could show how many enjoyments they procure which deceive the burden of life,[36] how many materials[37] which invigorate the springs of national industry, and extend and animate every part of our foreign and domestic commerce. This would be a curious[38] subject indeed,—but I must prescribe bounds to myself in a matter so vast and various.

29. I pass, therefore, to the colonies in another point of view,—their agriculture. This they have prosecuted with such a spirit that, besides feeding plentifully their own growing multitude, their annual export of grain, comprehending rice, has some years ago exceeded a million in value. Of their last harvest, I am persuaded, they will export much more. At the beginning of the century some of these colonies imported corn[39] from the mother country. For some time past the Old World has been fed from the New. The scarcity which you have felt would have been a desolating famine, if this child of your old age, with a true filial piety,[40] with a Roman charity, had not put the full breast of its youthful exuberance to the mouth of its exhausted parent.

30. As to the wealth which the colonies have drawn from the sea by their fisheries, you had all that matter fully opened at your bar.[41] You surely thought those acquisitions of value, for they seemed even to excite your envy;[42] and yet the spirit by which that enterprising employment has been exercised ought rather, in my opinion, to have raised your esteem and admira-

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[36] Deceive the burden of life—Make life easier or less burdensome.

[37] Materials—England imported raw materials for her industries from the colonies. [38] Curious—Interesting. [39] Corn—Grain.

[40] Filial piety—The allusion is to the story of Cymon who was imprisoned and condemned to death by starvation. His daughter, Xanthippe, visited him and fed him from her breast.

[41] That matter fully opened at your bar—One of the provisions of the "grand penal bill" excluded refractory colonies from the fisheries off Newfoundland. During the debates on that bill the matter of fisheries had been discussed.

[42] They seemed even to excite your envy—During the hearings on the fisheries referred to above, a number of English merchants, fishermen and others testified that the exclusion of the colonies from the Newfoundland fisheries would be a benefit to Great Britain.

tion. And pray, Sir, what in the world is equal to it? Pass by the other parts, and look at the manner in which the people of New England have of late carried on the whale fishery. Whilst we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson Bay and Davis Strait, whilst we are looking for them beneath the Arctic Circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes[43] and engaged under the frozen Serpent[44] of the south. Falkland Island,[45] which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition,[46] is but a stage and resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat[47] more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know that whilst some of them draw the line and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude[48] and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed[49] by their fisheries. No climate that it not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland nor the activity of France nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise ever carried this most perilous mode of hardy[50] industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent[51] people—a people who are still, as it were, but in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood. When I contemplate these things; when I know that the colonies in general owe little or nothing to any care of ours, and that they are not squeezed into this happy form by the constraints of watchful and suspicious government, but that through a wise and salutary[52] neglect a generous nature has been suffered to take her own way to perfection;—when I reflect upon these effects, when I see how profitable they have been to us, I feel all the pride of power sink, and all presumption in the wisdom of human contrivances melt and die away within me. My rigor relents. I pardon something to the spirit of liberty.

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[43] ANTIPODES—That is, on the opposite side of the globe.

[44] FROZEN SERPENT—The Serpent is a northern constellation. Burke here has in mind the Water Serpent, or Hydrus, a constellation within the Antarctic Circle.

[45] FALKLAND ISLAND—The Falkland Islands in the south Atlantic, about 300 miles east of the Strait of Magellan. Burke refers to the fact that whalers made these islands a base from which to operate on the Antarctic seas.

[46] WHICH SEEMED TOO REMOTE . . . FOR THE GRASP OF NATIONAL AMBITION—The English disputed possession of these islands, especially West Falkland, with the Spanish, who in 1767 drove the English out. Great Britain did not take final possession until 1832.

[47] EQUINOCTIAL HEAT—That is, the heat in the region of the equator.

[48] RUN THE LONGITUDE—Run northward, that is, along the lines of longitude.

[49] VEXED—Disquieted, stirred up.

[50] HARDY—Adventurous.

[51] RECENT—New.

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[52] Salutary—Wholesome, producing good.

Unit III

31–36. *The second argument—that the use of force is inexpedient and unwise. Four reasons against the use of force presented.*

31. I am sensible,[1] Sir, that all which I have asserted in my detail is admitted in the gross,[2] but that quite a different conclusion is drawn from it. America, gentlemen[3] say, is a noble object; it is an object well worth fighting for. Certainly it is, if fighting a people be the best way of gaining them. Gentlemen in this respect[4] will be led to their choice of means by their complexions[5] and their habits. Those who understand the military art will of course have some predilection[6] for it. Those who wield the thunder of the state[7] may have more confidence in the efficacy[8] of arms. But I confess, possibly for want of this knowledge, my opinion is much more in favor of prudent

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[1] Sensible—Aware. [2] In the gross—In a general way, on the whole.

[3] Gentlemen—That is, members of the House.

[4] In this respect—That is, in "gaining" the Americans.

[5] Complexions—Natural inclinations.

[6] Predilection—Preference. Burke here no doubt had in mind some of the military men in the House who were strong for subduing the colonies by arms. It is interesting to note that among these was General Burgoyne who lost the decisive battle at Saratoga. The lesson of Braddock's defeat seems to have been wholly lost upon these men, for they were of the opinion that the colonists would be no match for British regulars.

[7] Those who wield the thunder of state—That is, the Government. The allusion is to Jove, the Thunder, the king of the gods.

[8] Efficacy—Power to produce the effect desired.

management than of force,—considering force not as an odious,[9] but a feeble, instrument for preserving a people so numerous, so active, so growing, so spirited as this, in a profitable and subordinate connection with us.

32. First, Sir, permit me to observe that the use of force alone is but *temporary*. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again: and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered.

33. My next objection is its *uncertainty*. Terror is not always the effect of force; and an armament is not a victory. If you do not succeed, you are without resource:[10] for conciliation failing, force remains; but force failing, no further hope of reconciliation is left. Power and authority are sometimes bought by kindness; but they can never be begged as alms by an impoverished and defeated violence.

34. A further objection to force is that you *impair the object* by your very endeavors to preserve it. The thing you fought for is not the thing which you recover; but depreciated, sunk, wasted and consumed in the contest. Nothing less will content me than *whole America*. I do not choose to consume its strength along with our own; because in all parts it is the British strength that I consume. I do not choose to be caught by a foreign enemy at the end of this exhausting conflict; and still less in the midst of it. I may escape; but I can make no insurance against such an event.[11] Let me add that I do not choose wholly to break the American spirit; because it is the spirit that has made the country.

35. Lastly, we have no sort of *experience* in favor of force as an instrument in the rule of our colonies. Their growth and their utility has been owing to methods altogether different. Our ancient indulgence[12] has been said to be pursued to a fault.

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[9] ODIOUS—Undesirable, deserving abhorrence.

[10] WITHOUT RESOURCE—No other way remains of "gaining" the colonies.

[11] I CAN MAKE NO INSURANCE AGAINST SUCH AN EVENT—I cannot be sure that such a thing will not happen.

[12] OUR ANCIENT INDULGENCE—There was considerable opinion in Parliament that England had been too good and too lenient with respect to the colonies, so that America was something like a spoiled child.

It may be so; but we know, if feeling is evidence, that our fault was more tolerable[13] than our attempt to mend it, and our sin[14] far more salutary than our penitence.[15]

36. These, Sir, are my reasons for not entertaining that high opinion of untried force, by which many gentlemen, for whose sentiments in other particulars I have great respect, seem to be so greatly captivated. But there is still behind a third consideration concerning this object, which serves to determine my opinion on the sort of policy which ought to be pursued in the management of America, even more than its population and its commerce: I mean its *temper and character.*

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[13] Tolerable—Capable of being borne, endurable.
[14] Our sin—Our indulgence.
[15] Our penitence—Our attempts to make America "mind."

Unit IV

37–44. *The third argument—that the temper and character of the Americans demand concession. A fierce spirit of liberty declared to be the predominating feature of this character—six reasons for it presented.*

37. In this character of the Americans a love of freedom is the predominating feature which marks and distinguishes the whole: and as an ardent is always a jealous affection, your colonies become suspicious, restive[1] and untractable,[2] whenever they see the least attempt to wrest from them by force or shuffle from them by chicane[3] what they think the only advantage worth living for. This fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies probably than in any other people of the earth; and this from a great variety of powerful causes, which, to understand the true temper[4] of their minds and the direction which this spirit takes, it will not be amiss to lay open somewhat more largely.

38. First, the people of the colonies are descendants of English-

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[1] Restive—*Unruly.*
[2] Untractable—Unmanageable.
[3] Chicane (shĭ-kān′)—Trickery.
[4] Temper—Disposition, nature.

men. England, Sir, is a nation which still, I hope, respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you when this part of your character was most predominant;[5] and they took this bias and direction[6] the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas and on English principles. Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found. Liberty inheres in some sensible object; and every nation has formed to itself some favorite point, which by way of eminence[7] becomes the criterion[8] of their happiness. It happened, you know, Sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of taxing.[9] Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates or on the balance among the several orders of the state.[10] The question of money was not with them so immediate. But in England it was otherwise. On this point of taxes the ablest pens and most eloquent tongues[11] have been exercised, the greatest spirits have acted and suffered. In order to give the fullest satisfaction concerning the importance of this point, it was not only necessary for those who in argument defended the excellence of the English Constitution to insist on this privilege of granting money as a dry point of fact, and to prove that the right had been acknowledged in ancient parchments and blind usages to reside in a certain body called a House of Commons. They went much further: they attempted to prove, and they succeeded, that in theory it ought to be so, from the particular nature of the House of Commons as an immediate representative of the people, whether the old records had delivered this oracle or not. They took infinite pains to inculcate as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people must in effect themselves, mediately [12] or immediately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist. The colonies draw from you, as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe or might be endangered in twenty other particulars without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here [13] they felt its pulse; and as they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound. I do not say whether they were right or wrong in applying your general arguments to their own case. It is not easy, indeed, to make a monopoly of theorems and corollaries. The fact is that they did thus apply those general arguments; and your mode of governing them, whether through lenity or indolence, through wisdom or mistake, confirmed them in the imagination [14] that they, as well as you, had an interest in these common principles.

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[5] THE COLONISTS EMIGRATED . . . WAS MOST PREDOMINANT—Burke alludes here to the emigration of the Pilgrims and others who left England to escape religious intolerance and persecution under the Stuarts.

[6] THIS BIAS AND DIRECTION—Their strong love of freedom.

[7] BY WAY OF EMINENCE—Because of its importance.

[8] CRITERION—Measure, test.

[9] GREAT CONTESTS FOR FREEDOM . . . QUESTION OF TAXING—Particularly the struggle for Magna Charta and the Puritan Revolution.

[10] MOST OF THE CONTESTS . . . SEVERAL ORDERS OF THE STATE—See the account in *PROSE AND POETRY Eleventh Year* on the struggle in Rome between the plebeian and patrician orders, pp. 626–627.

[11] THE ABLEST PENS AND MOST ELOQUENT TONGUES—Such men as Pym. See the footnotes to *Cavalier Tunes* in *PROSE AND POETRY Eleventh Year,* and the notes to Gray's *Elegy in PROSE AND POETRY Tenth Year.*

39. They were further confirmed in this pleasing error by the form of their provincial legislative assemblies. Their governments are popular [15] in an high degree: some are merely popular; in all the popular representative is the most weighty; [16] and this share of the people in their ordinary government never fails to inspire them with lofty sentiments and with a strong aversion [17] from whatever tends to deprive them of their chief importance.

40. If anything were wanting to this necessary operation [18] of

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[12] MEDIATELY—Through their representatives.

[13] HERE—That is, when money or the right of taxation was involved.

[14] CONFIRMED THEM IN THE IMAGINATION—Convinced them.

[15] POPULAR—Responsible to the people.

[16] IN ALL THE POPULAR REPRESENTATIVE IS THE MOST WEIGHTY—In all, including those colonies which have an upper house or council which is not "popular," the assembly (called by Burke the "popular representative") is the most powerful. Colonial New York is a good example.

[17] AVERSION—Dislike for.

[18] TO THIS NECESSARY OPERATION—To produce this love of liberty which has resulted from their form of government.

the form of government, religion would have given it a complete effect. Religion, always a principle of energy, in this new people is no way worn out or impaired; and their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this free spirit. The people are Protestants, and of that kind which is the most adverse to all implicit[19] submission of mind and opinion. This is a persuasion not only favorable to liberty, but built upon it. I do not think, Sir, that the reason of this averseness in the dissenting churches[20] from all that looks like absolute government is so much to be sought in their religious tenets as in their history. Every one knows that the Roman Catholic religion is at least coeval[21] with most of the governments where it prevails; that it has generally gone hand in hand with them, and received great favor and every kind of support from authority. The Church of England too was formed from her cradle under the nursing care of regular government.[22] But the dissenting interests have sprung up in direct opposition to all the ordinary powers of the world, and could justify that opposition only on a strong claim to natural liberty. Their very existence depended on the powerful and unremitted[23] assertion of that claim. All Protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance:[24] it is the dissidence of dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. This religion, under a variety of denominations agreeing in nothing but in the communion[25] of the spirit of liberty, is predominant in most of the northern provinces, where the Church of England, notwithstanding its legal rights, is in reality no more than a sort of private sect, not composing most probably the tenth of the people. The colonists left England when this spirit was high, and in the emigrants was the highest of all; and even that stream of foreigners which has been constantly flowing into these colonies has, for the greatest part, been composed of dissenters from the establishments[26] of their several countries, and have brought with them a temper and character far from alien to that of the people with whom they mixed.

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[19] IMPLICIT—Blind, absolute.

[20] DISSENTING CHURCHES—The churches which dissented from the Church of England, the Separatists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and others.

[21] COEVAL—Co-existent in point of time, of the same duration.

[22] THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND . . . REGULAR GOVERNMENT—See the policy of Henry VIII in an encyclopedia or a history of England.

[23] UNREMITTED—Persistent.

[24] REFINEMENT ON THE PRINCIPLE OF RESISTANCE—An improvement, or extension, of the very principle of resistance itself.

[25] THE COMMUNION—The possession in common.

41. Sir, I can perceive by their manner that some gentlemen object to the latitude[27] of this description, because in the southern colonies the Church of England forms a large body and has a regular establishment.[28] It is certainly true. There is, however, a circumstance attending these colonies, which, in my opinion, fully counterbalances this difference and makes the spirit of liberty still more high and haughty than in those to the northward. It is, that in Virginia and the Carolinas they have a vast multitude of slaves. Where this is the case in any part of the world, those who are free are by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege. Not seeing there that freedom, as in countries where it is a common blessing and as broad and general as the air,[29] may be united with much abject[30] toil, with great misery, with all the exterior of servitude, liberty looks, amongst them, like something that is more noble and liberal. I do not mean, Sir, to commend the superior morality of this sentiment, which has at least as much pride as virtue in it; but I cannot alter the nature of man. The fact is so; and these people of the southern colonies are much more strongly and with a higher and more stubborn spirit attached to liberty than those to the northward. Such were all the ancient commonwealths; such were our Gothic[31] ancestors; such in our days were the Poles; and such will be all masters of

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[26] ESTABLISHMENTS—State religions.

[27] LATITUDE—Broad scope.

[28] REGULAR ESTABLISHMENT—It is the state church.

[29] BROAD AND GENERAL AS THE AIR—See *Macbeth,* Act III, Scene 4. The *Speech* gives repeated evidences of Burke's familiarity with the great English classics, particularly the works of Shakespeare and Milton.

[30] ABJECT—Degrading.

[31] GOTHIC—Used in Burke's day in the sense of Germanic.

slaves, who are not slaves themselves. In such a people the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible.

42. Permit me, Sir, to add another circumstance in our colonies, which contributes no mean[32] part towards the growth and effect of this untractable spirit: I mean their education. In no country perhaps in the world is the law so general a study. The profession itself is numerous and powerful, and in most provinces it takes the lead. The greater number of the deputies[33] sent to the Congress were lawyers. But all who read (and most do read) endeavor to obtain some smattering in that science.[34] I have been told by an eminent bookseller that in no branch of his business, after tracts of popular devotion,[35] were so many books as those on the law exported to the plantations.[36] The colonists have now fallen into the way of printing them for their own use. I hear that they have sold nearly as many of Blackstone's *Commentaries*[37] in America as in England. General Gage[38] marks out this disposition very particularly in a letter on your table. He states that all the people in his government are lawyers or smatterers in law; and that in Boston they have been enabled by successful chicane wholly to evade many parts of one of your capital penal constitutions.[39] The smartness of debate will say[40] that this knowledge ought to teach them more clearly the rights of legislature, their obligations to

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[32] MEAN—Insignificant.

[33] DEPUTIES—Representatives.

[34] THAT SCIENCE—The law.

[35] TRACTS OF POPULAR DEVOTION—Religious pamphlets.

[36] PLANTATIONS—Colonies.

[37] BLACKSTONE'S *Commentaries*—*Commentaries on the Laws of England* by Sir William Blackstone (1723–1780), a writer and authority on the law. His *Commentaries* formerly were held in high regard, and were invariably prescribed for law students.

[38] GENERAL GAGE—Governor of Massachusetts and commander-in-chief of the British Army in America. For his letter see Note 39 below.

[39] BY SUCCESSFUL CHICANE . . . CAPITAL PENAL CONSTITUTIONS—Burke alludes here to a letter written by Gage reporting the evasion by the people of Boston of a penal law (constitution) forbidding the calling of town-meetings in Massachusetts. The law was evaded simply by adjourning the town meeting to a future date or by peaceable assembly without issuing a call.

[40] THE SMARTNESS OF DEBATE WILL SAY—Someone may cleverly retort for the purpose of scoring a mere point in debate that, etc.

obedience and the penalties of rebellion. All this is mighty well. But my honorable and learned friend[41] on the floor,[42] who condescends to mark[43] what I say for animadversion,[44] will disdain that ground.[45] He has heard, as well as I, that when great honors and great emoluments[46] do not win over this knowledge[47] to the service of the state, it is a formidable adversary to government. If the spirit be not tamed and broken by these happy methods, it is stubborn and litigious.[48] *Abeunt studia in mores.*[49] This study renders men acute, inquisitive, dexterous, prompt in attack, ready in defense, full of resources.[50] In other countries the people, more simple and of a less mercurial cast,[51] judge of an ill principle in government only by an actual grievance; here[52] they anticipate the evil and judge of the pressure of the grievance by the badness of the principle. They augur misgovernment at a distance and snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.

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[41] My honorable and learned friend—The attorney-general, Lord Edward Thurlow, who was the first speaker to reply to Burke.

[42] On the floor—An allusion to the position in the House occupied by the members of the cabinet. The benches rise in banks or tiers on each side of the room like the seats in a stadium. The Government members sit on the right side, and the Opposition members on the left. At the farther end of the open space in the middle of the room, sits the Speaker. At his right on the bottom row of benches, those on the "floor," sit the cabinet members who are in the House. The "bar" is at the entrance of the room, opposite the Speaker.

[43] Condescends to mark—Thurlow evidently made some notes at this point, or Burke anticipated that he would.

[44] Animadversion—Criticism.

[45] Will disdain that ground—That is, Thurlow, Burke implies, will disdain to be "smart" in debate and that whatever he has to say in reply will be more weighty. This is a good illustration of anticipating a counter-argument and disposing of it.

[46] Emoluments—Rewards.

[47] This knowledge—This knowledge of law which the colonists possess. It is an adversary to government, because the colonists can use their knowledge of law to evade the law.

[48] Litigious—Quarrelsome, given to dispute.

[49] *Abeunt studia in mores*—Studies pass into character. This maxim came to Burke no doubt from Bacon's *Essays*.

[50] This study renders men acute . . . full of resources—Bacon says: "If he [a man] be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyer's cases."

[51] Of a less mercurial cast—Less ready-witted.

[52] Here—In America.

43. The last cause of this disobedient spirit in the colonies is hardly less powerful than the rest, as it is not merely moral, but laid deep in the natural constitution of things. Three thousand miles of ocean lie between you and them. No contrivance can prevent the effect of this distance in weakening government. Seas roll and months pass between the order and the execution; and the want of a speedy explanation of a single point is enough to defeat a whole system. You have, indeed, winged ministers[53] of vengeance, who carry your bolts in their pounces to the remotest verge of the sea. But there a power steps in that limits the arrogance of raging passions and furious elements, and says, "So far shalt thou go, and no farther." Who are you, that should fret and rage, and bite the chains of Nature? Nothing worse happens to you than does to all nations who have extensive empire;[54] and it happens in all forms into which empire can be thrown. In large bodies the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk cannot govern Egypt and Arabia and Kurdistan[55] as he governs Thrace; nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers which he has at Brusa and Smyrna. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster.[56] The sultan gets such obedience as he can. He governs with a loose rein, that he may govern at all; and the whole of the force and vigor of his authority in his centre is derived from a prudent relaxation in all his borders. Spain, in her provinces, is perhaps not so well obeyed as you are in yours. She complies too; she submits; she watches times. This is the immutable[57] condition, the eternal law, of extensive and detached empire.

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[53] WINGED MINISTERS—Ships of war which Burke compares to the eagle that carried Jove's thunderbolts in its talons, or pounces.

[54] EMPIRE—Territory.

[55] EGYPT AND ARABIA AND KURDISTAN—In Burke's day all these were under Turkish sovereignty. They are all more remote from the old capital, Constantinople, than Thrace which is a general name for the eastern part of the Balkan peninsula. Crimea and Algiers were also in 1775 under Turkish rule. Brusa and Smyrna are cities of Asiatic Turkey, not far from Constantinople.

[56] TRUCK AND HUCKSTER—To bargain and barter.

[57] IMMUTABLE—Invariable. "Condition" is used here in the sense of stipulation.

44. Then, Sir, from these six capital sources: of descent, of form of government, of religion in the northern provinces, of manners in the southern, of education, of the remoteness of situation from the first mover of government,[58]—from all these causes a fierce spirit of liberty has grown up. It has grown with the growth of the people in your colonies, and increased with the increase of their wealth: a spirit, that unhappily meeting with an exercise of power in England, which, however lawful, is not reconcilable to any ideas of liberty, much less with theirs, has kindled this flame that is ready to consume us.

[58] First mover of government—The imperial Parliament at London.

Unit V

45–46. *The fourth argument—that coercion is an unpolitic and dangerous experiment. Three reasons given.*

45. I do not mean to commend either the spirit in this excess or the moral causes which produce it. Perhaps a more smooth and accommodating spirit of freedom in them would be more acceptable to us. Perhaps ideas of liberty might be desired more reconcilable with an arbitrary[1] and boundless authority. Perhaps we might wish the colonists to be persuaded that their liberty is more secure when held in trust for them by us, as their guardians during a perpetual minority,[2] than with any part of it in their own hands. The question is not whether their spirit deserves praise or blame, but what, in the name of God, shall we do with it? You have before you the object, such as it is, with all its glories, with all its imperfections on its head. You see the magnitude, the importance, the temper, the habits, the disorders. By all these considerations we are strongly urged to determine something concerning it. We are called upon to fix some rule and line for our future conduct, which may give

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[1] Arbitrary—Despotic, dictatorial.

[2] Perpetual minority—"Minority" as used here means the state of being under age.

a little stability to our politics and prevent the return of such unhappy deliberations as the present. Every such return will bring the matter before us in a still more untractable form. For what astonishing and incredible things have we not seen already! What monsters[3] have not been generated from this unnatural[4] contention! Whilst every principle of authority and resistance has been pushed, upon both sides, as far as it would go, there is nothing so solid and certain, either in reasoning or in practice, that has not been shaken. Until very lately all authority in America seemed to be nothing but an emanation[5] from yours. Even the popular part[6] of the colony constitution derived all its activity, and its first vital movement, from the pleasure of the crown. We thought, Sir, that the utmost which the discontented colonists could do was to disturb authority; we never dreamt they could of themselves supply it, knowing in general what an operose[7] business it is to establish a government absolutely new. But having for our purposes in this contention resolved that none but an obedient assembly should sit,[8] the humors of the people there, finding all passage through the legal channel stopped, with great violence broke out another way. Some provinces have tried their experiment, as we have tried ours; and theirs has succeeded. They have formed a government sufficient for its purposes, without the bustle of a revolution or the troublesome formality of an election. Evident necessity and tacit[9] consent have done the business in an instant.

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[3] MONSTERS—Anything out of the usual course of nature. Burke is, of course, using the word figuratively to refer to the unheard-of developments in America which he enumerates below.

[4] UNNATURAL—As being a contention between a child (America) and a parent (England).

[5] EMANATION—A flowing forth.

[6] POPULAR PART—The popular assembly in each colony which derived its activity from and was called into session (its first vital movement) by the governor appointed by the king.

[7] OPEROSE (ŏp′ẽr-ōs)—Laborious.

[8] RESOLVED THAT NONE BUT AN OBEDIENT ASSEMBLY SHOULD SIT—Burke refers to the dissolution of the Virginia Assembly in 1774 when that body upon hearing of the Boston Port Bill passed resolutions declaring that Parliament had no authority to enact such legislation. Upon dissolution, the Assembly promptly reassembled in the Raleigh Tavern.

[9] TACIT—Implied, silent.

So well they have done it, that Lord Dunmore[10] (the account is among the fragments[11] on your table) tells you that the new institution is infinitely better obeyed than the ancient government ever was in its most fortunate periods. Obedience is what makes government, and not the names by which it is called: not the name of governor, as formerly; or committee, as at present. This new government has originated directly from the people, and was not transmitted through any of the ordinary artificial media of a positive constitution.[12] It was not a manufacture ready formed, and transmitted to them in that condition from England. The evil arising from hence is this: that the colonists having once found the possibility of enjoying the advantages of order in the midst of a struggle for liberty, such struggles will not henceforward seem so terrible to the settled and sober part of mankind, as they had appeared before the trial.

46. Pursuing the same plan of punishing by the denial of the exercise of government to still greater lengths, we wholly abrogated[13] the ancient government of Massachusetts. We were confident that the first feeling, if not the very prospect of anarchy, would instantly enforce a complete submission. The experiment was tried. A new, strange, unexpected face of things appeared. Anarchy is found tolerable.[14] A vast province has now subsisted, and subsisted in a considerable degree of health and vigor, for near a twelvemonth, without governor, without public council, without judges, without executive magistrates. How long it will continue in this state, or what may arise out of this unheard-of situation, how can the wisest of us conjecture? Our late experience has taught us that many of those fundamental principles formerly believed infallible[15] are either not of the importance they were imagined to be, or that we have

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[10] LORD DUNMORE—Governor of Virginia in 1774.

[11] FRAGMENTS—The pieces of evidence.

[12] TRANSMITTED . . . POSITIVE CONSTITUTION—That is, defined and laid out in a constitution.

[13] ABROGATED—Revoked. This was done by one of the coercive acts of 1774.

[14] TOLERABLE—Endurable.

[15] INFALLIBLE—Certain, past dispute, beyond all question.

not at all adverted[16] to some other far more important and far more powerful principles, which entirely overrule those we had considered as omnipotent. I am much against any further experiments which tend to put to the proof any more of these allowed opinions[17] which contribute so much to the public tranquillity. In effect, we suffer as much at home by this loosening of all ties and this concussion[18] of all established opinions, as we do abroad. For, in order to prove that the Americans have no right to their liberties, we are every day endeavoring to subvert[19] the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own. To prove that Americans ought not to be free, we are obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself; and we never seem to gain a paltry advantage over them in debate, without attacking some of those principles, or deriding some of those feelings, for which our ancestors have shed their blood.

[16] ADVERTED—Taken into consideration.

[17] ALLOWED OPINIONS—Acknowledged or established opinions—the "fundamental principles" referred to above, among which was a belief that society could not continue without government in a state of anarchy.

[18] CONCUSSION—Shaking. [19] SUBVERT—Overthrow.

UNIT VI

47–64. *The fifth argument—that of the three ways of proceeding relative to the stubborn spirit which prevails in the colonies—to change that spirit by removing the causes, to prosecute it as criminal, or to comply with it as necessary, only the last is practicable; for (1) the causes cannot be removed and (2) it is impossible to bring a criminal action against a whole people.*

47. But, Sir, in wishing to put an end to pernicious[1] experiments, I do not mean to preclude[2] the fullest inquiry. Far from it. Far from deciding on a sudden or partial view, I would patiently go round and round the subject, and survey it minutely in every possible aspect. Sir, if I were capable of engaging you to an equal attention, I would state that, as far as I am capable

[1] PERNICIOUS—Ruinous. [2] PRECLUDE—Shut out.

of discerning, there are but three ways of proceeding relative to this stubborn spirit which prevails in your colonies and disturbs your government. These are: to change that spirit as inconvenient,[3] by removing the causes; to prosecute it as criminal; or to comply with it as necessary. I would not be guilty of an imperfect enumeration; I can think of but these three. Another has indeed been started, that of giving up the colonies;[4] but it met so slight a reception that I do not think myself obliged to dwell a great while upon it. It is nothing but a little sally of anger, like the forwardness[5] of peevish children, who, when they cannot get all they would have, are resolved to take nothing.

48. The first of these plans, to change the spirit as inconvenient, by removing the causes, I think is the most like a systematic proceeding. It is radical[6] in its principle; but it is attended with great difficulties, some of them little short, as I conceive, of impossibilities. This will appear by examining into the plans which have been proposed.

49. As the growing population in the colonies is evidently one cause of their resistance, it was last session mentioned in both Houses by men of weight, and received not without applause, that in order to check this evil, it would be proper for the crown to make no further grants of land. But to this scheme there are two objections. The first, that there is already so much unsettled land in private hands as to afford room for an immense future population, although the crown not only withheld its grants, but annihilated its soil. If this be the case, then the only effect of this avarice of desolation,[7] this hoarding of a royal wilderness, would be to raise the value of the possessions in the hands of the great private monopolists,[8] without any adequate check to the growing and alarming mischief of population.

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[3] INCONVENIENT—Causing trouble.

[4] ANOTHER HAS INDEED BEEN STARTED, THAT OF GIVING UP THE COLONIES—Dean Tucker of Gloucester declared that the colonies had ceased to be of advantage to England and that they might better be left to go their own way.

[5] FORWARDNESS—Sulkiness, perversity.

[6] RADICAL—That is, going to the root of the matter.

[7] AVARICE OF DESOLATION—Niggardly policy with respect to unoccupied lands.

[8] PRIVATE MONOPOLISTS—Great landowners.

50. But if you stopped your grants, what would be the consequence? The people would occupy without grants. They have already so occupied in many places. You cannot station garrisons in every part of these deserts.[9] If you drive the people from one place, they will carry on their annual tillage and remove with their flocks and herds to another. Many of the people in the back settlements are already little attached to particular situations.[10] Already they have topped the Appalachian Mountains. From thence they behold before them an immense plain, one vast, rich, level meadow; a square of five hundred miles.[11] Over this they would wander without a possibility of restraint; they would change their manners with the habits of their life; would soon forget a government by which they were disowned; would become hordes of English Tartars,[12] and pouring down upon your unfortified frontiers a fierce and irresistible cavalry, become masters of your governors and your counsellors, your collectors and comptrollers,[13] and of all the slaves[14] that adhered to them. Such would, and in no long time must, be the effect of attempting to forbid as a crime, and to suppress as an evil, the command and blessing of Providence, "Increase and multiply." Such would be the happy result of an endeavor to keep as a lair of wild beasts that earth which God, by an express charter, has given to the children of men. Far different and surely much wiser has been our policy hitherto. Hitherto we have invited our people, by every kind of bounty, to fixed establishments.[15] We have invited the husbandman[16] to look to authority for his title.[17] We have taught him piously

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[9] DESERTS—Used here to refer to unoccupied territory.

[10] LITTLE ATTACHED TO PARTICULAR SITUATIONS—Burke here alludes to the pioneering impulse which kept pushing farther west.

[11] A SQUARE OF FIVE HUNDRED MILES—Burke, himself, did not fully sense the vastness of the American continent.

[12] TARTARS—A general designation for the nomads of the Asiatic steppes.

[13] COMPTROLLERS—Auditors.

[14] SLAVES—All persons who were obedient to the government.

[15] FIXED ESTABLISHMENTS—Orderly and well-governed communities.

[16] HUSBANDMAN—Farmer, tiller of the soil.

[17] TO LOOK TO AUTHORITY FOR HIS TITLE—That is, to take up land only to which the government has given him title, or right to possession; and not to "squat" on the land.

to believe in the mysterious virtue of wax and parchment.[18] We have thrown each tract of land, as it was peopled, into districts, that the ruling power should never be wholly out of sight. We have settled all we could; and we have carefully attended every settlement with government.

51. Adhering, Sir, as I do, to this policy, as well as for the reasons I have just given, I think this new project of hedging-in population to be neither prudent nor practicable.

52. To impoverish the colonies in general, and in particular to arrest the noble course of their marine enterprises,[19] would be a more easy task. I freely confess it. We have shown a disposition[20] to a system of this kind,—a disposition even to continue the restraint after the offense, looking on ourselves as rivals to our colonies, and persuaded that of course we must gain all that they shall lose. Much mischief we may certainly do. The power inadequate to all other things is often more than sufficient for this. I do not look on the direct and immediate power of the colonies to resist our violence as very formidable. In this, however, I may be mistaken. But when I consider that we have colonies for no purpose but to be serviceable to us, it seems to my poor understanding a little preposterous to make them unserviceable in order to keep them obedient. It is, in truth, nothing more than the old and, as I thought, exploded problem of tyranny, which proposes to beggar its subjects into submission. But remember, when you have completed your system of impoverishment, that Nature still proceeds in her ordinary course; that discontent will increase with misery; and that there are critical moments in the fortune of all states, when they who are too weak to contribute to your prosperity may be strong enough to complete your ruin. *Spoliatis arma supersunt.*[21]

53. The temper and character which prevail in our colonies are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We cannot, I

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[18] In the mysterious virtue of wax and parchment—That is, in the necessity for having a deed to his land.

[19] Marine enterprises—Sea-borne commerce and fisheries.

[20] Shown a disposition—See the *Historical Background.*

[21] *Spoliatis arma supersunt*—The despoiled may still take up arms.

fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition; your speech would betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.

54. I think it is nearly as little in our power to change their republican religion as their free descent, or to substitute the Roman Catholic as a penalty, or the Church of England as an improvement. The mode of inquisition and dragooning[22] is going out of fashion in the Old World; and I should not confide much to their[23] efficacy in the New. The education of the Americans is also on the same unalterable bottom with their religion. You cannot persuade them to burn their books of curious science;[24] to banish their lawyers from their courts of laws; or to quench the lights of their assemblies by refusing to choose those persons who are best read in their privileges. It would be no less impracticable to think of wholly annihilating the popular assemblies in which these lawyers sit. The army, by which we must govern in their place, would be far more chargeable[25] to us; not quite so effectual; and perhaps in the end full as difficult to be kept in obedience.

55. With regard to the high aristocratic spirit of Virginia and the southern colonies, it has been proposed, I know, to reduce it by declaring a general enfranchisement[26] of their slaves. This project has had its advocates and panegyrists;[27] yet I never could argue myself into any opinion of it. Slaves are often much attached to their masters. A general wild offer of liberty would not always be accepted. History furnishes few instances of it. It is sometimes as hard to persuade slaves to be free as it is

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[22] THE MODE OF INQUISITION AND DRAGOONING—Persecution and harassing people because of their religion.

[23] THEIR—Refers to "inquisition" and "dragooning."

[24] CURIOUS SCIENCE—Their books of law.

[25] CHARGEABLE—Expensive.

[26] ENFRANCHISEMENT—The act of freeing and granting the rights of citizenship.

[27] PANEGYRISTS—Those who speak great praises for project.

to compel freemen to be slaves;[28] and in this auspicious scheme we should have both these pleasing tasks on our hands at once. But when we talk of enfranchisement, do we not perceive that the American master may enfranchise too, and arm servile hands in defense of freedom?—a measure to which other people have had recourse more than once, and not without success, in a desperate situation of their affairs.

56. Slaves as these unfortunate black people are, and dull as all men are from slavery, must they not a little suspect the offer of freedom from that very nation which has sold them to their present masters? from that nation, one of whose causes of quarrel[29] with those masters is their refusal to deal any more in that inhuman traffic? An offer of freedom from England would come rather oddly, shipped to them in an African vessel,[30] which is refused an entry into the ports of Virginia or Carolina, with a cargo of three hundred Angola[31] negroes. It would be curious to see the Guinea[32] captain attempting at the same instant to publish his proclamation of liberty and to advertise his sale of slaves.

57. But let us suppose all these moral difficulties got over. The ocean remains. You cannot pump this dry; and as long as it continues in its present bed, so long all the causes which weaken authority by distance will continue.

Ye gods, annihilate but space and time,
And make two lovers happy![33]

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[28] IT IS SOMETIMES AS HARD . . . TO BE SLAVES—See the poem *The Slave* in *PROSE AND POETRY Ninth Year,* pp. 418–419.

[29] CAUSES OF QUARREL—Before the Revolution, a number of colonies, including Virginia and South Carolina, attempted to discourage the slave trade, but on the protest of English merchants, the British government protected the traffic. The original draft of the Declaration of Independence charged the king with being "Determined to keep a market where men should be bought and sold."

[30] AFRICAN VESSEL—An African slaver. See the description of an African slaver in *The Man Without a Country* in *PROSE AND POETRY Eighth Year,* pp. 24–26.

[31] ANGOLA—A territory in West Africa which supplied slaves to the traders.

[32] GUINEA—A coastal region of West Africa which supplied slaves to the trade. A "Guinea captain" means the captain of a slave ship trading to the coast of Guinea.

[33] YE GODS, etc.—Quoted from *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus, or the*

was a pious and passionate prayer, but just as reasonable as many of the serious wishes of very grave and solemn politicians.

58. If then, Sir, it seems almost desperate to think of any alterative course for changing the moral causes (and not quite easy to remove the natural) which produce prejudices[34] irreconcilable to the late exercise[35] of our authority, but that the spirit infallibly will continue; and continuing, will produce such effects as now embarrass us,—the second mode under consideration is to prosecute that spirit in its overt acts[36] as *criminal.*

59. At this proposition I must pause a moment. The thing seems a great deal too big for my ideas of jurisprudence.[37] It should seem to my way of conceiving such matters, that there is a very wide difference in reason and policy between the mode of proceeding on the irregular conduct of scattered individuals, or even of bands of men, who disturb order within the state, and the civil dissensions which may, from time to time, on great questions, agitate the several communities which compose a great empire. It looks to me to be narrow and pedantic[38] to apply the ordinary ideas of criminal justice to this great public contest. I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment[39] against a whole people. I cannot insult and ridicule the feelings of millions of my fellow-creatures, as Sir Edward Coke[40]

Art of Sinking in Poetry by John Arbuthnot. It was a humorous piece, popular in its day, ridiculing every kind of pendantry.

[34] PREJUDICES—Things prejudicial or damaging to.

[35] LATE EXERCISE—Recent attempts to exercise.

[36] OVERT ACT—An act which shows a criminal intention, as distinct from a mere expression of opinion or intention.

[37] JURISPRUDENCE—Philosophy or science of law.

[38] PEDANTIC—Used here in the sense of academic.

[39] INDICTMENT—A formal accusation of crime. See your civics text on the work of the grand jury. One requirement of an indictment is that it must be specific—it must charge the violation of a definite penal law and it must recite overt acts.

[40] SIR EDWARD COKE (Cŏŏk)—Coke, who was a great lawyer, was attorney-general under James I. He prosecuted Sir Walter Ralegh for treason. Ralegh was accused of conspiring "to surprise the king's person." The evidence against him was flimsy, and Coke made up for his lack of evidence by violent abuse of Ralegh. It was throughout a shameful proceeding, inspired by the prejudice of the narrow and pedantic James I for anyone who outranked him in accomplishments.

insulted one excellent individual (Sir Walter Ralegh)[41] at the bar. I am not ripe to pass sentence on the gravest public bodies,[42] entrusted with magistracies of great authority and dignity, and charged with the safety of their fellow-citizens, upon the very same title[43] that I am. I really think that for wise men this is not judicious; for sober men, not decent; for minds tinctured with humanity, not mild and merciful.

60. Perhaps, Sir, I am mistaken in my idea of an empire[44] as distinguished from a single state or kingdom. But my idea of it is this: that an empire is the aggregate of many states under one common head, whether this head be a monarch or a presiding republic.[45] It does in such constitutions frequently happen (and nothing but the dismal, cold, dead uniformity of servitude can prevent its happening) that the subordinate parts have many local privileges and immunities.[46] Between these privileges and the supreme common authority the line may be extremely nice.[47] Of course disputes—often, too, very bitter disputes—and much ill blood will arise. But though every privilege is an exemption (in the case) from the ordinary exercise of the supreme authority, it is no denial of it. The claim of a privilege seems rather, *ex vi termini*,[48] to imply a superior power; for to talk of the privileges of a state, or of a person who has no superior, is hardly any better than speaking nonsense. Now in such unfortunate quarrels among the component parts of a

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[41] Sir Walter Ralegh—The cloak incident has made Ralegh known to most people as a courtier. He was one of the most representative men of Elizabethan England—a brave soldier, a statesman, an explorer, an author and a gentleman. For an interesting account of his career see *Sir Walter Ralegh "The Shepherd of the Ocean"* by Hersey, The Macmillan Company. This is an inexpensive book which should be in every high school library.

[42] Gravest public bodies—The colonial assemblies or legislatures.

[43] Upon the very same title—That is, deriving their authority from the same source as Parliament itself—the people.

[44] Empire—A group of states, each having its own government.

[45] Presiding republic—Does the possession of the Philippines, Porto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and other colonial possessions make the United States an empire?

[46] Immunities—Exemptions.

[47] Nice—Fine-drawn, difficult to distinguish.

[48] *Ex vi termini*—From the force of the term itself. The term here is "privilege."

great political union of communities, I can scarcely conceive anything more completely imprudent than for the head of the empire to insist that, if any privilege is pleaded against his will or his acts, [that] his whole authority is denied; instantly to proclaim rebellion, to beat to arms,[49] and to put the offending provinces under the ban. Will not this, Sir, very soon teach the provinces to make no distinctions on their part? Will it not teach them that the government against which a claim of liberty is tantamount [50] to high treason is a government to which submission is equivalent to slavery? It may not always be quite convenient [51] to impress dependent communities with such an idea.

61. We are, indeed, in all disputes with the colonies, by the necessity of things, the judge. It is true, Sir. But I confess that the character of judge in my own cause is a thing that frightens me. Instead of filling me with pride, I am exceedingly humbled by it. I cannot proceed with a stern, assured, judicial confidence, until I find myself in something more like a judicial character.[52] I must have these hesitations as long as I am compelled to recollect that, in my little reading upon such contests as these, the sense of mankind has at least as often decided against the superior as the subordinate power. Sir, let me add, too, that the opinion of my having some abstract right in my favor would not put me much at my ease in passing sentence, unless I could be sure that there were no rights which, in their exercise under certain circumstances, were not the most odious of all wrongs and the most vexatious of all injustice.[53] Sir, these considerations have great weight with me, when I find things so circumstanced, that I see the same party at once a civil litigant against me in point of right and a culprit before me, while I sit as a

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[49] TO BEAT TO ARMS—To sound the call to arms.

[50] TANTAMOUNT—Equivalent.

[51] CONVENIENT—Without difficulty.

[52] JUDICIAL CHARACTER—The judge to be impartial should be disinterested; he should not be judge in his own case.

[53] INJUSTICE—An allusion to the maxim *Summum jus, summa injuria.* The meaning is that the law enforced to the extreme results in extreme injustice.

criminal judge on acts of his, whose moral quality is to be decided upon the merits of that very litigation.[54] Men are every now and then put, by the complexity of human affairs, into strange situations; but justice is the same, let the judge be in what situation he will.

62. There is, Sir, also a circumstance which convinces me that this mode of criminal proceeding is not (at least in the present stage of our contest) altogether expedient,[55] which is nothing less that the conduct of those very persons[56] who have seemed to adopt that mode, by lately declaring a rebellion[57] in Massachusetts Bay, as they had formerly addressed to have traitors brought hither, under an act of Henry the Eighth, for trial.[58] For though rebellion is declared, it is not proceeded against as such; nor have any steps been taken towards the apprehension or conviction of any individual offender, either on our late or our former address; but modes of public coercion have been adopted, and such as have much more resemblance to a sort of qualified hostility towards an independent power than the pun-

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[54] THE SAME PARTY AT ONCE A CIVIL LITIGANT . . . MERITS OF THAT VERY LITIGATION—To understand Burke's point one must first have a knowledge of the distinction between a *civil* and a *criminal* proceeding at law. A civil action is one in which A proceeds against B because B has infringed the rights of A. For example, B has run over A with an automobile. A may sue B for damages; this is a *civil* action. The state may proceed against B for violation of the speed laws; this is a *criminal* action, for B is charged with the commission of a *crime*. Burke says that circumstances are such that America is at once a civil litigant against England over England's violation of America's rights, and also a culprit (that is, one accused of a crime) since England alleges that America's resistance to England's infringement of her rights constitutes a crime. It is difficult for the judge in such a case, since the two actions are confused—the moral quality (guilt or innocence in the criminal action) depends upon the merits of the civil action.

[55] EXPEDIENT—Suited to the purpose or end in view.

[56] THOSE VERY PERSONS—That is, the Government.

[57] BY DECLARING A REBELLION—In February 1775 Parliament declared that a rebellion existed in Massachusetts. Burke's objection to such a proceeding was that Parliament did not prove that rebellion existed by proving overt acts.

[58] FORMERLY ADDRESSED TO HAVE TRAITORS . . . FOR TRIAL—In 1769, Parliament sent an *Address* to the king assuring him of its support if he would proceed against the Americans according to an old law passed in the time of Henry VIII. This law provided for the trial in the kingdom of treasons committed out of the realm. Of course, the act was never intended for such a situation as that which had developed in America.

ishment of rebellious subjects. All this seems rather inconsistent; but it shows how difficult it is to apply these juridical[59] ideas to our present case.

63. In this situation, let us seriously and coolly ponder. What is it we have got[60] by all our menaces, which have been many and ferocious? What advantage have we derived from the penal laws we have passed, and which, for the time, have been severe and numerous? What advances have we made towards our object, by the sending of a force which, by land and sea, is no contemptible strength? Has the disorder abated? Nothing less. When I see things in this situation, after such confident hopes, bold promises and active exertions, I cannot for my life avoid a suspicion that the plan itself is not correctly right.

64. If, then, the removal of the causes of this spirit of American liberty be for the greater part, or rather entirely, impracticable; if the ideas of criminal process be inapplicable, or, if applicable, are in the highest degree inexpedient; what way yet remains? No way is open but the third and last,—to comply with the American spirit as necessary; or, if you please, to submit to it as a necessary evil.

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[59] JURIDICAL—Pertaining to law or jurisprudence.

[60] WE HAVE GOT—Note Burke's use of this expression. Is it "good" English?

UNIT VII

65–139. *Burke's arguments on the second "capital leading question"—what the concession ought to be. His contention that no way is open but the third and last plan mentioned above—to comply with the American spirit as necessary.*

65– 87. *The contention that England should satisfy the complaint of the colonies that they are taxed in a Parliament in which they are not represented by admitting them into an interest in the Constitution. Six arguments presented in support of this contention.*

65. If we adopt this mode, if we mean to conciliate and concede, let us see of what nature the concession ought to be. To ascertain the nature of our concession, we must look at their complaint. The colonies complain that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom.[1] They complain that they are taxed in a Parliament in which they are not represented. If you mean to satisfy them at all, you must satisfy them with regard to this complaint. If you mean to please any people, you must give them the boon which they ask,—not what you may think better for them, but of a kind totally different. Such an act may be a wise regulation, but it is no concession; whereas our present theme is the mode of giving satisfaction.

66. Sir, I think you must perceive that I am resolved this day to have nothing at all to do with the question of the right of taxation. Some gentlemen startle,—but it is true; I put it totally out of the question. It is less than nothing in my consideration. I do not indeed wonder, nor will you, Sir, that gentlemen of profound learning are fond of displaying it on this profound subject.[2] But my consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question. I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government; and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of Nature; or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power.[3] These are deep questions, where great names militate[4] against each other; where reason is perplexed; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion: for high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides;

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[1] Characteristic mark and seal of British freedom—The right to be represented in the government which taxes them. The following sentence explains their grievance.

[2] Profound subject—Taxation has always been and still is a difficult subject.

[3] I do not examine . . . supreme power—Two theories of the right or power to tax.

[4] Great names militate—That is, authorities conflict.

and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is the great

> Serbonian bog,
> Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
> Where armies whole have sunk.[5] 7

I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company.[6] The question with me is not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do, but what humanity, reason and justice tell me I *ought* to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one? Is no concession proper but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant? Or does it lessen the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious claim, because you have your evidence-room[7] full of titles and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them? What signify all those titles and all those arms? Of what avail are they, when the reason of the thing tells me that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit; and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons?

67. Such is steadfastly my opinion of the absolute necessity of keeping up the concord[8] of this empire by a unity of spirit, though in a diversity of operations, that if I were sure the colonists had at their leaving this country sealed a regular compact of servitude, that they had solemnly abjured[9] all the rights of citizens, that they had made a vow to renounce all ideas of liberty for them and their posterity to all generations; yet I should hold myself obliged to conform to the temper I found universally prevalent in my own day,[10] and to govern two million

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[5] Serbonian bog, etc.—A quotation from Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

[6] Respectable company—The "high and reverend authorities" referred to above.

[7] Evidence-room—That is, document room.

[8] Concord—Peace, harmony.

[9] Abjured—Sworn away, resigned.

[10] Temper I found universally prevalent in my own day—Democracy and the philosophy that all men are created free and equal was in the air in Burke's day.

of men, impatient of servitude, on the principles of freedom. I am not determining a point of law; I am restoring tranquillity: and the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of government is fitted for them. That point nothing else can or ought to determine.

68. My idea, therefore, without considering whether we yield as matter of right or grant as matter of favor, is *to admit the people of our colonies into an interest*[11] *in the Constitution;* and by recording that admission in the journals of Parliament, to give them as strong an assurance as the nature of the thing will admit, that we mean forever to adhere to that solemn declaration of systematic indulgence.

69. Some years ago, the repeal of a revenue act,[12] upon its understood principle,[13] might have served to show that we intended an unconditional abatement[14] of the exercise of a taxing power. Such a measure was then sufficient to remove all suspicion and to give perfect content.[15] But unfortunate events since that time may make something further necessary; and not more necessary for the satisfaction of the colonies than for the dignity and consistency of our own future proceedings.

70. I have taken a very incorrect measure of the disposition of the House, if this proposal in itself would be received with dislike. I think, Sir, we have few American financiers.[16] But our misfortune is, we are too acute;[17] we are too exquisite in our conjectures of the future,[18] for men oppressed with such

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[11] INTO AN INTEREST—That is, give them a share in its benefits and treat them in all respects as Englishmen.

[12] A REVENUE ACT—Burke probably refers to the Stamp Act.

[13] UPON ITS UNDERSTOOD PRINCIPLE—The Stamp Act was repealed to quiet the protest of the colonies. The repeal, however, was accompanied by the so-called Dependency Act, asserting the right of Parliament to tax the colonies. The repeal was not, therefore, "upon its understood principle," since Parliament still declared its right to tax.

[14] UNCONDITIONAL ABATEMENT—That is, an unconditional surrender.

[15] PERFECT CONTENT—After the repeal of the Stamp Act the colonies were loud in their expressions of gratitude and allegiance.

[16] AMERICAN FINANCIERS—Meaning, members of the Government who entertained the opinion that the revenue from America would never amount to much.

[17] ACUTE—Discerning.

[18] WE ARE TOO EXQUISITE IN OUR CONJECTURES OF THE FUTURE—That is, we profess to be able to tell accurately what will happen in the future.

great and present evils. The more moderate among the opposers of parliamentary concession freely confess that they hope no good from taxation; but they apprehend[19] the colonists have further views, and if this point were conceded, they would instantly attack the trade laws.[20] These gentlemen are convinced that this was the intention from the beginning, and the quarrel of the Americans with taxation was no more than a cloak and cover to this design. Such has been the language, even of a gentleman[21] of real moderation and of a natural temper well adjusted to fair and equal government. I am, however, Sir, not a little surprised at this kind of discourse whenever I hear it; and I am the more surprised on account of the arguments which I constantly find in company with it, and which are often urged from the same mouths and on the same day.

71. For instance, when we allege that it is against reason to tax a people under so many restraints in trade as the Americans, the noble lord in the blue ribbon shall tell you that the restraints on trade are futile and useless, of no advantage to us, and of no burden to those on whom they are imposed; that the trade to America is not secured by the Acts of Navigation, but by the natural and irresistible advantage of a commercial preference.

72. Such is the merit of the trade laws in this posture of the debate. But when strong internal circumstances are urged against the taxes; when the scheme is dissected; when experience and the nature of things are brought to prove, and do prove, the utter impossibility of obtaining an effective revenue

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[19] Apprehend—Fear.

[20] Trade laws—In order to understand the rest of the speech, it will be necessary to know the distinction between the *trade laws* and the *revenue laws*. The purpose of the trade laws, such as the Navigation Acts, was simply to secure to England the trade of the colonies. One of the acts prohibited the carrying of certain articles to any other than English ports. The colonists often traded contrary to these laws with the French and Spanish in the West Indies. On the whole, however, the colonists admitted the legality of the trade laws. They enjoyed certain privileges under them, and they were not subjected to restrictions which were not imposed generally by European nations on their colonies. The revenue laws had for their purpose raising money in the colonies for the purpose of meeting military expenses in America and maintaining the civil government.

[21] Gentleman—Another member of the House.

from the colonies;—when these things are pressed, or rather press themselves, so as to drive the advocates of colony taxes to a clear admission of the futility of the scheme; then, Sir, the sleeping[22] trade laws revive from their trance, and this useless taxation is to be kept sacred, not for its own sake, but as a counterguard and security of the laws of trade.

73. Then, Sir, you keep up revenue laws which are mischievous, in order to preserve trade laws that are useless. Such is the wisdom of our plan in both its members.[23] They are separately given up as of no value; and yet one is always to be defended for the sake of the other. But I cannot agree with the noble lord nor with the pamphlet[24] from whence he seems to have borrowed these ideas concerning the inutility of the trade laws; for without idolizing them, I am sure they are still in many ways of great use to us, and in former times they have been of the greatest. They do confine, and they do greatly narrow, the market for the Americans. But my perfect conviction of this does not help me in the least to discern how the revenue laws form any security whatsoever to the commercial regulations; or that these commercial regulations are the true ground of the quarrel; or that the giving way in any one instance of authority is to lose all that may remain unconceded.

74. One fact is clear and indisputable: the public and avowed origin of this quarrel was on taxation. This quarrel has indeed brought on new disputes on new questions; but certainly the least bitter and the fewest of all on the trade laws. To judge which of the two be the real, radical[25] cause of quarrel, we have to see whether the commercial dispute did, in order of time, precede the dispute on taxation. There is not a shadow of evidence[26] for it. Next, to enable us to judge whether at

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[22] Sleeping—So called because they were admittedly not very effective.

[23] Members—Parts.

[24] Pamphlet—A reference to one of Dean Tucker's pamphlets in which the writer declared that the trade laws gave England no advantage which could not be secured if America were independent.

[25] Radical—Basic, at the root.

[26] Not a shadow of evidence—This is hardly true, but Burke did not care to admit it.

this moment a dislike to the trade laws be the real cause of quarrel, it is absolutely necessary to put the taxes out of the question by a repeal. See how the Americans act in this position, and then you will be able to discern correctly what is the true object of the controversy, or whether any controversy at all will remain. Unless you consent to remove this cause of difference, it is impossible with decency to assert that the dispute is not upon what it is avowed to be. And I would, Sir, recommend to your serious consideration, whether it be prudent to form a rule for punishing people, not on their own acts, but on your conjectures. Surely it is preposterous at the very best. It is not justifying your anger by their misconduct, but it is converting your ill-will into their delinquency.

75. But the colonies will go further. Alas! alas! when will this speculating against fact and reason end? What will quiet these panic fears which we entertain of the hostile effect of a conciliatory conduct? Is it true that no case can exist in which it is proper for the sovereign to accede to the desires of his discontented subjects? Is there anything peculiar in this case to make a rule for itself? Is all authority of course lost, when it is not pushed to the extreme? Is it a certain maxim that the fewer causes of dissatisfaction are left by government, the more the subject will be inclined to resist and rebel?

76. All these objections being in fact no more than suspicions, conjectures, divinations,[27] formed in defiance of fact and experience, they did not, Sir, discourage me from entertaining the idea of a conciliatory concession, founded on the principles which I have just stated.

77. In forming a plan for this purpose, I endeavored to put myself in that frame of mind which was the most natural and the most reasonable, and which was certainly the most probable means of securing me from all error. I set out with a perfect distrust of my own abilities, a total renunciation of every speculation of my own; and with a profound reverence for the wisdom of our ancestors, who have left us the inheritance of so happy

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[27] DIVINATIONS—Guesses.

a constitution and so flourishing an empire, and, what is a thousand times more valuable, the treasury of the maxims and principles which formed the one and obtained the other.

78. During the reigns of the kings of Spain of the Austrian family,[28] whenever they were at a loss in the Spanish councils, it was common for their statesmen to say that they ought to consult the genius [29] of Philip the Second.[30] The genius of Philip the Second might mislead them; and the issue of their affairs showed that they had not chosen the most perfect standard.[31] But, Sir, I am sure that I shall not be misled, when in a case of constitutional difficulty I consult the genius of the English Constitution. Consulting at that oracle [32] (it was with all due humility and piety), I found four capital [33] examples in a similar case before me: those of Ireland, Wales, Chester and Durham.

79. Ireland before the English conquest,[34] though never governed by a despotic power, had no Parliament. How far the English Parliament itself was at that time modelled according to the present form is disputed among antiquarians.[35] But we have all the reason in the world to be assured that a form of Parliament such as England then enjoyed she instantly communicated to Ireland; and we are equally sure that almost every successive improvement in constitutional liberty, as fast as it was made here, was transmitted thither. The feudal baronage and the feudal knighthood, the roots of our primitive constitution, were early transplanted into that soil, and grew and flour-

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[28] AUSTRIAN FAMILY—Juana, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, married Philip, Archduke of Austria. The kings descended from this union were of the "Austrian family," or Hapsburgs.

[29] GENIUS—Spirit.

[30] PHILIP THE SECOND—Grandson of Philip I and son of Charles V. According to some standards he was an able monarch.

[31] PERFECT STANDARD—Philip's policies, especially his taxation, did much to ruin the country.

[32] ORACLE—That is, source of truth. The student should remember that the English Constitution is no document defining the structure and powers of government like ours. It is rather a body of documents, such as the Petition of Right, court decisions, laws, and traditions embodying fundamental principles of government.

[33] CAPITAL—Important.

[34] ENGLISH CONQUEST—Ireland was first made subject to English authority in 1172 under Henry II.

[35] ANTIQUARIANS—Historians.

ished there. Magna Charta,[36] if it did not give us originally the House of Commons, gave us at least an House of Commons of weight and consequence. But your ancestors did not churlishly sit down alone to the feast of Magna Charta. Ireland was made immediately a partaker. This benefit of English laws and liberties, I confess, was not at first extended to *all* Ireland.[37] Mark the consequence. English authority and English liberties had exactly the same boundaries. Your standard could never be advanced an inch before your privileges. Sir John Davies[38] shows beyond a doubt that the refusal of a general communication of these rights was the true cause why Ireland was five hundred years in subduing; and after the vain projects of a military government,[39] attempted in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was soon discovered that nothing could make that country English in civility[40] and allegiance, but your laws and your forms of legislature. It was not English arms, but the English Constitution, that conquered Ireland. From that time[41] Ireland has ever had a general Parliament, as she had before a partial Parliament. You changed the people,[42] you altered the religion,[43] but you never touched the form or the vital substance of free government in that kingdom.[44] You deposed kings; you restored them; you altered the succession to theirs as well as to your own crown;[45] but you never altered their constitution,[46] the principle of which was respected by usurpation, restored with the restoration of monarchy, and established, I trust, forever by the glorious Revolution.[47] This has made Ireland the great and flourishing kingdom[48] that it is; and from a disgrace and a burden intolerable to this nation, has rendered her a principal part of our strength and ornament. This country cannot be said to have ever formally taxed[49] her. The irregular things done in the confusion of mighty troubles and on the hinge[50] of great revolutions, even if all were done that is said to have been done, form no example. If they have any effect in argument, they make an exception to prove the rule. None of your own liberties could stand a moment, if the casual deviations[51] from them at such times were suffered to be used as proofs of their nullity. By the lucrative[52] amount of such casual breaches in the Constitution, judge what the stated and fixed rule of supply[53] has been in that kingdom. Your Irish pensioners[54] would starve, if they had no other fund to live on than taxes granted by English authority.[55] Turn your eyes to those popular grants[56] from whence all your great supplies are come, and learn to respect that only source of public wealth in the British Empire.

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[36] MAGNA CHARTA—The Great Charter of rights and liberties wrested from John I in 1215.

[37] NOT AT FIRST EXTENDED TO *all* IRELAND—Until the time of James I, the English system of law and government was confined to a district in eastern Ireland called the Pale.

[38] SIR JOHN DAVIES—Speaker of the first Irish House of Commons. In 1612 he published a book explaining why Ireland was never entirely subdued nor brought under obedience to the Crown before the reign of James I.

[39] VAIN PROJECTS OF A MILITARY GOVERNMENT—After the rebellion of Shayne O'Neill, an Ulster chief, Elizabeth set up a military government in Ireland. This policy resulted in further rebellions, and protracted warfare.

[40] CIVILITY—Civilization.

[41] FROM THAT TIME—As a matter of fact Ireland had a Parliament before "that time." In 1541, the Irish Parliament was for the first time attended by native chieftains as well as by the lords of the Pale.

[42] CHANGED THE PEOPLE—The settling of English and Scotch in Ulster.

[43] ALTERED THE RELIGION—Under James I the Anglican church was extended over all Ireland.

[44] YOU NEVER TOUCHED THE FORM . . . IN THAT KINGDOM—Hardly true. Under James I, "The independence of the Irish Parliament was destroyed by the creation of 40 boroughs out of small hamlets, which secured a permanent majority to the crown."—*International Encyclopedia.*

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[45] You deposed kings; you restored them; . . . to your crown—The reference is to the deposition of Charles I and James II, and the restoration of Charles II—all kings of Great Britain and Ireland. The succession was altered when James II was deposed and William II of the House of Hanover was made king of Great Britain and Ireland by Parliament.

[46] Never altered their constitution—In 1801 the Irish Parliament ceased upon passage of the Act of Union. From then until December 6, 1922, there was no Irish Parliament recognized by England.

[47] Glorious Revolution—The revolution of 1688 which deposed James II. It is designated as the "glorious" Revolution inasmuch as it signalized a complete victory for the Whigs.

[48] Great and flourishing kingdom—Somewhat exaggerated for the purposes of the argument.

[49] To have ever formally taxed—Comment on this construction.

[50] On the hinge—Contingent upon.

[51] Casual deviations—Accidental, occasional.

[52] Lucrative—Abundant, profitable. Evidently used in irony.

[53] Supply—Revenue.

[54] Irish pensioners—Pensioners paid out the revenues from Ireland.

[55] By English authority—As a result, or by virtue, of English authority.

[56] Popular grants—Gifts voluntarily voted by the Irish Parliament.

80. My next example is Wales. This country was said to be reduced by Henry the Third.[57] It was said more truly to be so by Edward the First. But though then conquered, it was not looked upon as any part of the realm of England. Its old constitution, whatever that might have been, was destroyed, and no good one was substituted in its place. The care of that tract was put into the hands of Lords Marchers,[58]—a form of government of a very singular kind, a strange, heterogeneous monster, something between hostility and government; perhaps it has a sort of resemblance, according to the modes of those times, to that of commander-in-chief at present, to whom all civil power is granted as secondary. The manners of the Welsh nation followed the genius of the government: the people were ferocious, restive, savage and uncultivated, sometimes composed,[59] never pacified. Wales, within itself, was in perpetual disorder; and it kept the frontier of England in perpetual alarm. Benefits from it to the state there were none. Wales was only known to England by incursion and invasion.

81. Sir, during that state of things Parliament was not idle. They attempted to subdue the fierce spirit of the Welsh by all sorts of rigorous laws. They prohibited by statute the sending all sorts of arms into Wales, as you prohibit by proclamation (with something more of doubt on the legality) the sending arms to America. They disarmed the Welsh by statute, as you attempted (but still with more question on the legality) to disarm New England[60] by an instruction. They made an act to drag offenders from Wales into Eng-

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[57] HENRY THE THIRD—(1207–1272). Edward I (1239–1307).

[58] LORDS MARCHERS—So called because they were the lords of the "marches" or border districts. They were to all purposes petty kings supreme in their districts, and their activities were divided between subduing their Welsh subjects and governing them; hence Burke speaks of their rule as a "heterogeneous monster, something between hostility and government."

[59] COMPOSED—Passive, quiet.

[60] TO DISARM NEW ENGLAND—General Gage was instructed to disarm the colonists. It will be remembered that the battle of Lexington was precipitated by the attempt of the British to seize military stores.

land for trial, as you have done (but with more hardship)[61] with regard to America. By another act, where one of the parties was an Englishman, they ordained that his trial should be always by English. They made acts to restrain trade, as you do; and they prevented the Welsh from the use of fairs and markets, as you do the Americans from fisheries and foreign ports. In short, when the statute-book was not quite so much swelled as it is now, you find no less than fifteen acts of penal regulation on the subject of Wales.

82. Here we rub our hands—A fine body of precedents for the authority of Parliament and the use of it!—I admit it fully; and pray add likewise to these precedents, that all the while Wales rid this kingdom like an *incubus;*[62] that it was an unprofitable and oppressive burden; and that an Englishman travelling in that country could not go six yards from the highroad without being murdered.

83. The march of the human mind is slow. Sir, it was not until after two hundred years discovered that by an eternal law Providence had decreed vexation to violence, and poverty to rapine.[63] Your ancestors did, however, at length open their eyes to the ill-husbandry[64] of injustice. They found that the tyranny of a free people could of all tyrannies the least be endured; and that laws made against an whole nation were not the most effectual methods for securing its obedience. Accordingly, in the twenty-seventh year of Henry the Eighth, the course was entirely altered. With a preamble stating the entire and perfect rights of the crown of England, it gave to the Welsh all the rights and privileges of English subjects. A political order was established; the military power gave way to the civil; the marches were turned into counties. But that a nation should have a right to English liberties, and yet no share at all in the fundamental security of these liberties,—the grant of their own property,—seemed a thing so incongruous that eight years after, —that is, in the thirty-fifth of that reign,—a complete and not

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[61] MORE HARDSHIP—Because such offenders were to be transported across the sea.

[62] *Incubus*—Nightmare.

[63] RAPINE—Pillage.

[64] ILL-HUSBANDRY—Poor economy.

ill-proportioned representation by counties and boroughs was bestowed upon Wales by act of Parliament. From that moment, as by a charm, the tumults subsided; obedience was restored; peace, order and civilization followed in the train of liberty. When the day-star of the English Constitution had arisen in their hearts, all was harmony within and without:—

—Simul alba nautis
Stella refulsit,
Defluit saxis agitatus humor;
Concidunt venti, fugiuntque nubes,
Et minax (quod sic voluere) ponto
Unda recumbit.[65]

84. The very same year the County Palatine of Chester[66] received the same relief from its oppressions and the same remedy to its disorders. Before this time Chester was little less distempered than Wales. The inhabitants, without rights themselves, were the fittest to destroy the rights of others; and from thence Richard the Second[67] drew the standing army of archers with which for a time he oppressed England. The people of Chester applied to Parliament in a petition[68] penned as I shall read to you:—

To the King our Sovereign Lord, in most humble wise shewen[69] unto your most excellent Majesty the inhabitants of your Grace's County Palatine of Chester: (1) That where[70] the said County Palatine of Chester is and hath been always hitherto exempt, excluded and separated out and from your high court to Parliament, to have any knights and burgesses[71] within the said court; by reason whereof the said inhabitants have hitherto sustained manifold disherisons,[72] losses and damages, as well in their lands, goods and bodies, as in the good, civil and politic governance and maintenance of the commonwealth of their said country. (2) And forasmuch as the said inhabitants have always hitherto been bound by the acts and statutes made and ordained by your said Highness and your most noble progenitors,[73] by authority of the said court, as far forth as other counties, cities and boroughs have been, that have had their knights and burgesses within your said court of Parliament, and yet have had neither knight ne[74] burgess there for the said County Palatine; the said inhabitants, for lack thereof, have been oftentimes touched and grieved with acts and statutes made within the said court, as well derogatory unto the most ancient jurisdictions, liberties and privileges of your said County Palatine, as prejudicial unto the commonwealth, quietness, rest and peace of your Grace's most bounden subjects inhabiting within the same.

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[65] Simul alba nautis, etc.—From the *Ode to Augustus* by the Roman poet Horace: "As soon as their bright star has shone upon the mariners, the troubled surge falls down from the rocks, the winds cease, the clouds vanish, and the threatening waves subside into the sea (because they have so willed it)."

[66] County Palatine of Chester—A palatine is a province ruled over by a count, earl, etc., having royal powers and privileges.

[67] Richard the Second—Richard was deposed in 1399.

[68] Petition—This was made to Henry VIII.

[69] Shewen—Show, declare. The subject of shewen is inhabitants.

[70] Where—Whereas.

[71] Knights and burgesses—That is, representatives.

[72] Disherisons—Deprivations.

85. What did Parliament with this audacious address? Reject it as a libel?[75] Treat it as an affront to government? Spurn it as a derogation[76] from the rights of legislature? Did they toss it over the table? Did they burn it by the hands of the common hangman?[77] They took the petition of grievance, all rugged as it was, without softening or temperament,[78] unpurged of the original bitterness and indignation of complaint; they made it the very preamble to their act of redress, and consecrated its principle to all ages in the sanctuary of legislation.

86. Here is my third example. It was attended with the success of the two former. Chester, civilized as well as Wales, has demonstrated that freedom, and not servitude, is the cure for anarchy; as religion, and not atheism, is the true remedy for superstition. Sir, this pattern of Chester was followed in the reign of Charles the Second with regard to the County Palatine

[73] Progenitors—Ancestors. [74] Ne—Nor.

[75] Libel—General Gage rejected an address from the council of Massachusetts because the address criticized Gage's predecessors in the governorship. Gage termed the address a "libel" and sent it back to the council.

[76] Derogation—Detraction. When the assembly of New York declared that Parliament had no right to tax the colonies, Lord North opposed bringing the petition of New York up in Parliament, inasmuch as the denial of Parliament's right constituted in his opinion a derogation of the authority of Parliament.

[77] Burn it by the hands of the common hangman—A reference to the old practice of having offensive books, etc., burnt by the hangman or executioner. [78] Temperament—Modification.

of Durham, which is my fourth example. This county had long lain out of the pale[79] of free legislation. So scrupulously was the example of Chester followed, that the style of the preamble is nearly the same with that of the Chester act; and without affecting the abstract extent[80] of the authority of Parliament, it recognizes the equity[81] of not suffering any considerable district in which the British subjects may act as a body, to be taxed without their own voice in the grant.

87. Now if the doctrines of policy contained in these preambles and the force of these examples in the acts of Parliaments avail anything, what can be said against applying them with regard to America? Are not the people of America as much Englishmen as the Welsh? The preamble of the act of Henry the Eighth says the Welsh speak a language no way resembling that of his Majesty's English subjects. Are the Americans not as numerous? If we may trust the learned and accurate Judge Barrington's[82] account of North Wales, and take that as a standard to measure the rest, there is no comparison. The people cannot amount to above 200,000,—not a tenth part of the number in the colonies. Is America in rebellion? Wales was hardly ever free from it. Have you attempted to govern America by penal statutes? You made fifteen for Wales. But your legislative authority is perfect with regard to America. Was it less perfect in Wales, Chester, and Durham? But America is virtually represented.[83] What! does the electric force of virtual representation more easily pass over the Atlantic than pervade Wales, which lies in your neighborhood? or than Chester and Durham, surrounded by abundance of representation that is actual and palpable?[84] But, Sir, your ancestors thought this sort of virtual representation, however ample, to be totally in-

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[79] Pale—Territory.

[80] Abstract extent—Theoretical limits.

[81] Equity—Fairness.

[82] Judge Barrington—A justice of certain counties in Wales.

[83] Virtually represented—The theory of virtual representation was that a member of Parliament did not represent merely the district or constituency which sent him to Parliament; he represented the whole empire, hence America was represented.

[84] Palpable—Tangible, actual as opposed to theoretical.

sufficient for the freedom of the inhabitants of territories that are so near and comparatively so inconsiderable. How then can I think it sufficient for those which are infinitely greater and infinitely more remote?

UNIT VIII

88–121. *The seventh argument in support of the contention that England should satisfy the complaint of the colonies. Burke's plan for satisfying this complaint presented in six fundamental resolutions, with three corollary resolutions looking to the redress of certain grievances. Four arguments in support of Burke's plan given.*

88. You will now, Sir, perhaps imagine that I am on the point of proposing to you a scheme for a representation of the colonies in Parliament. Perhaps I might be inclined to entertain some such thought; but a great flood[1] stops me in my course. *Opposuit natura*[2]—I cannot remove the eternal barriers of the creation. The thing, in that mode,[3] I do not know to be possible. As I meddle with no theory, I do not absolutely assert the impracticability of such a representation: but I do not see my way to it; and those who have been more confident have not been more successful. However, the arm of public benevolence is not shortened, and there are often several means to the same end. What Nature has disjoined in one way Wisdom may unite in another. When we cannot give the benefit as we would wish, let us not refuse it altogether. If we cannot give the principal, let us find a substitute. But how? Where? What substitute?

89. Fortunately I am not obliged for the ways and means of this substitute to tax my own unproductive invention. I am

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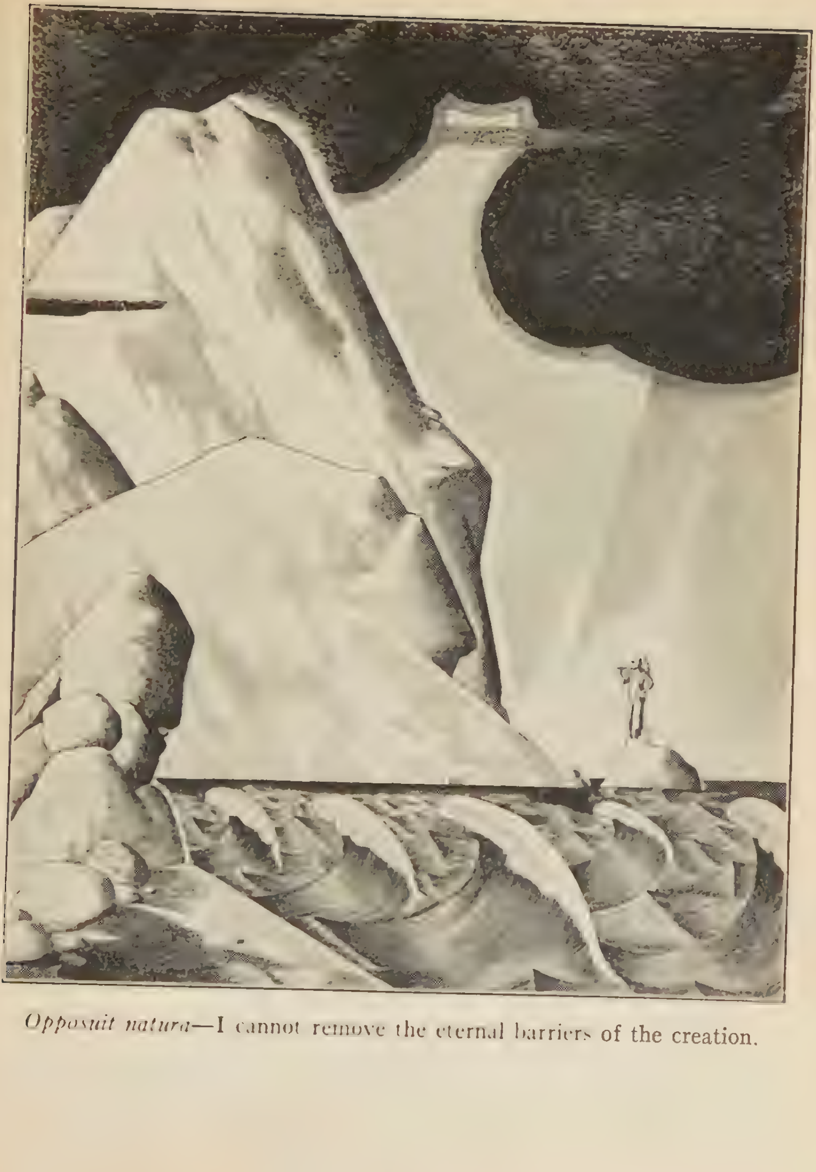
[1] GREAT FLOOD—That is, the ocean.

[2] *Opposuit natura*—Nature is opposed.

[3] THE THING, IN THAT MODE—That is, representation at so great a distance.



Opposuit natura—I cannot remove the eternal barriers of the creation.

not even obliged to go to the rich treasury of the fertile[4] framers of imaginary commonwealths, not to the *Republic* of Plato, not to the *Utopia* of More, not to the *Oceana* of Harrington.[5] It[6] is before me; it is at my feet,—

> And the rude swain
> Treads daily on it with his clouted shoon.[7]

I only wish you to recognize, for the theory, the ancient constitutional policy of this kingdom with regard to representation, as that policy has been declared in acts of Parliament; and as to the practice, to return to that mode which an uniform experience has marked out to you as best, and in which you walked with security, advantage and honor, until the year 1763.[8]

90. My resolutions therefore means to establish the equity and justice of a taxation of America by *grant,*[9] and not by *imposition;*[10] to mark[11] the *legal competency*[12] of the colony assemblies for the support of their government in peace and for public aids in time of war; to acknowledge that this legal competency has had a *dutiful and beneficial exercise;* and that experience has shown the *benefit of their grants* and the *futility of parliamentary taxation as a method of supply.*

91. These solid truths compose six fundamental propositions. There are three more resolutions corollary to[13] these. If you admit the first set, you can hardly reject the others. But if you

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[4] FERTILE—That is, fertile in imagination.

[5] *Republic* OF PLATO, NOT TO THE *Utopia* OF MORE, NOT TO THE *Ocena* OF HARRINGTON—The *Republic* was a work by the Greek philosopher Plato describing the ideal state. *Utopia* was a book similar in its purport, written by Sir Thomas More (1478–1535). More was a distinguished lawyer and statesman, and a patron of the new learning. *Oceana,* less distinguished than the first two, was the work of James Harrington (1611–1677).

[6] IT—That is, the substitute for representation.

[7] AND THE RUDE SWAIN, etc.—See Milton's *Comus,* lines 634–635.

[8] UNTIL THE YEAR 1763—In 1763, the year in which the Whigs lost control of the government and the Grenville ministry came in.

[9] BY *grant*—By free and voluntary contribution.

[10] *Imposition*—By imposing taxes upon the colonies.

[11] MARK—To declare.

[12] TO MARK THE *legal competency*—That is, to declare that authority legally to raise money for the support of their government exists in the colonial assemblies.

[13] COROLLARY TO—Following from, growing naturally out of.

admit the first, I shall be far from solicitous[14] whether you accept or refuse the last. I think these six massive pillars will be of strength sufficient to support the temple of British concord.[15] I have no more doubt than I entertain of my existence that, if you admitted these, you would command an immediate peace and, with but tolerable future management, a lasting obedience in America. I am not arrogant in this confident assurance. The propositions are all mere matters of fact; and if they are such facts as draw irresistible conclusions even in the stating, this is the power of truth, and not any management of mine.

92. Sir, I shall open the whole plan to you together, with such observations on the motions as may tend to illustrate them where they may want explanation. The first is a resolution,—

> That the colonies and plantations[16] of Great Britain in North America, consisting of fourteen[17] separate governments, and containing two millions and upwards of free inhabitants, have not had the liberty and privilege of electing and sending any knights and burgesses, or others, to represent them in the high court of Parliament.

This is a plain matter of fact, necessary to be laid down, and (excepting the description) it is laid down in the language of the constitution; it is taken nearly *verbatim*[18] from acts of Parliament.

93. The second is like unto the first,—

> That the said colonies and plantations have been liable to, and bounden[19] by, several subsidies,[20] payments, rates and taxes, given and granted by Parliament, though the said colonies and plantations have not their knights and burgesses in the said high court of Parliament, of their own election, to represent the condition of their country; by lack whereof they have been oftentimes touched and grieved by subsidies given, granted and assented to, in the said court, in a manner prejudicial[21] to

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[14] SOLICITOUS—Concerned.

[15] TEMPLE OF BRITISH CONCORD—The allusion is to the Temple of Concord in ancient Rome.

[16] PLANTATIONS—Settlements, colonies.

[17] FOURTEEN—Quebec included.

[18] *Verbatim*—Word for word.

[19] BOUNDEN—Bound by, obliged to pay.

[20] SUBSIDIES—Grants of money.

[21] PREJUDICIAL—Injurious.

the commonwealth, quietness, rest and peace of the subjects inhabiting within the same.

94. Is this description too hot or too cold, too strong or too weak? Does it arrogate[22] too much to the supreme legislature? Does it lean too much to the claims of the people? If it runs into any of these errors, the fault is not mine. It is the language of your own ancient acts of Parliament:—

> Non meus hic sermo, sed quae praecepit Ofellus,
> Rusticus, abnormis sapiens.[23]

It is the genuine produce of the ancient, rustic, manly, home-bred sense of this country,—I did not dare to rub off a particle of the venerable rust that rather adorns and preserves, than destroys, the metal. It would be a profanation to touch with a tool the stones which construct the sacred altar of peace. I would not violate with modern polish the ingenuous[24] and noble roughness of these truly constitutional materials. Above all things, I was resolved not to be guilty of tampering,—the odious vice of restless and unstable minds. I put my foot in the tracks of our forefathers, where I can neither wander nor stumble. Determining to fix articles of peace, I was resolved not to be wise beyond what was written; I was resolved to use nothing else than the form of sound words, to let others abound in their own sense, and carefully to abstain from all expressions of my own. What the law has said, I say. In all things else I am silent. I have no organ but for her words. This, if it be not ingenious, I am sure is safe.

95. There are indeed words expressive of grievance in this second resolution, which those who are resolved always to be in the right will deny to contain matter of fact, as applied to the present case, although Parliament thought them true with

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[22] ARROGATE—Usurp, appropriate.

[23] NON MEUS HIC SERMO, etc.—Quoted from the *Satires* of Horace: "This is not my own doctrine, but that taught by Ofellus, a rustic, wise without rules."

[24] INGENUOUS—Frank, open. Do not confuse this word with "ingenious" in this same paragraph.

regard to the counties of Chester and Durham. They will deny that the Americans were ever "touched and grieved" with the taxes. If they consider nothing in taxes but their weight as pecuniary[25] impositions, there might be some pretense for this denial.[26] But men may be sorely touched and deeply grieved in their privileges as well as in their purses. Men may lose little in property by the act which takes away all their freedom. When a man is robbed of a trifle on the highway, it is not the twopence lost that constitutes the capital outrage. This is not confined to privileges. Even ancient indulgences[27] withdrawn, without offense on the part of those who enjoyed such favors, operate as grievances. But were the Americans then not touched and grieved by the taxes, in some measure, merely as taxes? If so, why were they almost all either wholly repealed or exceedingly reduced? Were they not touched and grieved even by the regulating duties of the sixth of George the Second? Else why were the duties first reduced to one-third in 1764, and afterwards to a third of that third in the year 1766? Were they not touched and grieved by the Stamp Act? I shall say they were, until that tax is revived. Were they not touched and grieved by the duties of 1767, which were likewise repealed, and which Lord Hillsborough[28] tells you (for the ministry) were laid contrary to the true principle of commerce? Is not the assurance[29] given by that noble person to the colonies of a resolution to lay no more taxes on them, an admission that taxes would touch and grieve them? Is not the resolution of the noble lord[30] in the blue ribbon, now standing on your journals, the strongest of all proofs that parliamentary subsidies really touched and grieved them? Else why all these changes, modifications, repeals, assurances and resolutions?

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[25] PECUNIARY—Consisting in money.

[26] PRETENSE FOR THIS DENIAL—It is probably true that the taxes were not heavy. It was the principle of Parliamentary taxation which Americans resented, not the amount of it.

[27] INDULGENCES—Privileges.

[28] LORD HILLSBOROUGH—Secretary of State for the colonies.

[29] ASSURANCE—In 1767 Lord Hillsborough sent an assurance to the colonies that no more taxes for revenue would be laid.

[30] RESOLUTION OF THE NOBLE LORD—See Note 6 to Par. 1–14.

96. The next proposition is,—

> That, from the distance of the said colonies and from other circumstances, no method hath hitherto been devised for procuring a representation in Parliament for the said colonies.

This is an assertion of a fact. I go no further on the paper; though in my private judgment a useful representation is impossible. I am sure it is not desired by them;[31] nor ought it, perhaps, by us: but I abstain from opinions.

97. The fourth resolution is,—

> That each of the said colonies hath within itself a body, chosen in part or in the whole by the freemen,[32] freeholders[33] or other free inhabitants thereof, commonly called the general assembly, or general court; with powers legally to raise, levy and assess, according to the several usage of such colonies, duties and taxes towards defraying all sorts of public services.

98. This competence in the colony assemblies is certain. It is proved by the whole tenor of their acts of supply in all the assemblies, in which the constant style of granting is, "An aid to his Majesty"; and acts granting to the crown have regularly for near a century passed the public offices[34] without dispute. Those who have been pleased paradoxically[35] to deny this right, holding that none but the British Parliament can grant to the crown, are wished[36] to look to what is done, not only in the colonies, but in Ireland, in one uniform, unbroken tenor[37] every session. Sir, I am surprised that this doctrine should come

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[31] Not desired by them—The colonies preferred to govern themselves through their own assemblies.

[32] Freemen—Those having all the rights of citizenship.

[33] Freeholders—That is, property owners.

[34] Passed the public offices—Accepted as legal by the Government.

[35] Paradoxically—Acting in a contradictory manner, by at once acknowledging past grants and at the same time declaring them illegal. Grenville, for example, held that the colonies could not legally grant revenues to the Crown. The theory of this contention was that the purse strings were held by Parliament alone, it being feared that the King might be able to make himself independent of Parliament if he could get revenue from the colonies.

[36] Are wished—Is this passive construction usual with "wish"?

[37] Tenor—Course.

from some of the law servants[38] of the crown. I say that if the crown could be responsible,[39] his Majesty—but certainly the ministers, and even these law officers themselves through whose hands the acts pass, biennially in Ireland or annually in the colonies, are in an habitual course of committing impeachable[40] offenses. What habitual offenders have been all presidents of the council,[41] all secretaries of state, all first lords of trade,[42] all attorneys and all solicitors-general![43] However, they are safe, as no one impeaches them; and there is no ground of charge against them, except in their own unfounded theories.

99. The fifth resolution is also a resolution of fact,—

> That the said general assemblies, general courts, or other bodies legally qualified as aforesaid, have at sundry times freely granted several large subsidies and public aids[44] for his Majesty's service, according to their abilities, when required thereto by letter from one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state; and that their right to grant the same and their cheerfulness and sufficiency in the said grants have been at sundry times acknowledged by Parliament.

To say nothing of their great expenses[45] in the Indian wars, and not to take their exertion in foreign ones so high[46] as the supplies in the year 1695,[47] not to go back to their public contributions in the year 1710,[48] I shall begin to travel only where the journals give me light,—resolving to deal in nothing but fact authenticated by parliamentary record, and to build myself wholly on that solid basis.

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[38] LAW SERVANTS—Lord Chief Justice Mansfield was of the opinion that the raising of money by colonial grant was a violation of the Declaration of Rights.

[39] IF THE CROWN COULD BE RESPONSIBLE—Under a government such as the English "the king can do no wrong," the ministers being responsible for all acts of the Government.

[40] IMPEACHABLE—That is, meriting impeachment or removal from office.

[41] PRESIDENTS OF THE COUNCIL—The Privy Council, a group of confidential advisers to the king.

[42] FIRST LORDS OF TRADE—A committee of the Privy Council having oversight of trade and commerce.

[43] ATTORNEYS AND ALL SOLICITORS-GENERAL—Law officers of the crown.

[44] SUBSIDIES AND PUBLIC AIDS—Grants of money and provision.

[45] GREAT EXPENSES—See *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* in *PROSE AND POETRY Tenth Year,* Sec. 46, pp. 352–356; 374–385.

[46] SO HIGH—So remote.

[47] 1695—King William's War—costly to the colonists in men, money, and property.

[48] 1710—Queen Anne's War, known in Europe as the War of the Spanish Succession. In this war New England troops recaptured Acadia.

100. On the 4th of April, 1748,[49] a committee of this House came to the following resolution:—

> *Resolved,* That it is the opinion of this committee *that it is just and reasonable* that the several provinces and colonies of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island, be reimbursed the expenses they have been at in taking and securing to the crown of Great Britain the island of Cape Breton and its dependencies.

101. These expenses were immense for such colonies. They were above £200,000 sterling: money first raised and advanced on their public credit.

102. On the 28th of January, 1756,[50] a message from the king came to us to this effect:—

> His Majesty, being sensible of the zeal and vigor with which his faithful subjects of certain colonies in North America have exerted themselves in defense of his Majesty's just rights and possessions, recommends it to this House to take the same into their consideration, and to enable his Majesty to give them such assistance as may be a *proper reward and encouragement.*

103. On the 3d of February, 1756, the House came to a suitable resolution, expressed in words nearly the same as those of the message; but with the further addition that the money then voted was as an *encouragement* to the colonies to exert themselves with vigor. It will not be necessary to go through all the testimonies which your own records have given to the truth of my resolutions. I will only refer you to the places in the journals:—

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[49] 1748—King George's War, known in Europe as the War of the Austrian Succession. New England troops took the strong fortress of Louisburg on the island of Cape Breton. At the end of the war, the English surrendered this to the French, much to the disappointment of the colonists. Lord North and his colleagues no doubt found it convenient to forget such things when they accused the Americans of ingratitude and of the desire to enjoy British protection without bearing their share of the burden.

[50] 1756—French and Indian War.

Vol. XXVII.—16th and 19th May, 1757.

Vol. XXVIII.—June 1st, 1758; April 26th and 30th, 1759; March 26th and 31st, and April 28th, 1760; Jan. 9th and 20th, 1761.

Vol. XXIX.—Jan. 22nd and 26th, 1762; March 14th and 17th, 1763.

104. Sir, here is the repeated acknowledgment of Parliament that the colonies not only gave, but gave to satiety.[51] This nation has formally acknowledged two things: first, that the colonies had gone beyond their abilities, Parliament having thought it necessary to reimburse them; secondly, that they had acted legally and laudably[52] in their grants of money and their maintenance of troops, since the compensation is expressly given as reward and encouragement. Reward is not bestowed for acts that are unlawful; and encouragement is not held out to things that deserve reprehension.[53] My resolution therefore does nothing more than collect into one proposition what is scattered through your journals. I give you nothing but your own; and you cannot refuse in the gross what you have so often acknowledged in detail. The admission of this, which will be so honorable to them and to you, will indeed be mortal to all the miserable stories[54] by which the passions of the misguided people have been engaged in an unhappy system. The people heard, indeed, from the beginning of these disputes, one thing continually dinned in their ears,—that reason and justice demanded that the Americans, who paid no taxes, should be compelled to contribute. How did that fact of their paying nothing stand when the taxing system began? When Mr. Grenville began to form his system[55] of American revenue, he stated in this House that the colonies were then in debt two millions six hundred thousand pounds sterling money, and was of opinion they would discharge that debt in four years. On this state, those untaxed people were actually subject to the payment of taxes to the amount of six

[51] SATIETY—That is, "until it hurt."

[52] LAUDABLY—In a praiseworthy manner.

[53] REPREHENSION—Reproof.

[54] MISERABLE STORIES—Burke refers here to the pamphlets and speeches which accused the Americans of ingratitude.

[55] MR. GRENVILLE BEGAN TO FORM HIS SYSTEM—See the *Historical Background.*

hundred and fifty thousand a year. In fact, however, Mr. Grenville was mistaken. The funds given for sinking the debt did not prove quite so ample as both the colonies and he expected. The calculation was too sanguine:[56] the reduction was not completed till some years after, and at different times in different colonies. However, the taxes after the war continued too great to bear any addition with prudence or propriety; and when the burdens imposed in consequence of former requisitions[57] were discharged, our tone became too high to resort again to requisition. No colony since that time ever has had any requisition whatsoever made to it.

105. We see the sense of the crown and the sense of Parliament on the productive nature of a *revenue by grant*. Now search the same journals for the produce of the *revenue by imposition*. Where is it? Let us know the volume and the page. What is the gross,[58] what is the net[59] produce? To what service[60] is it applied? How have you appropriated its surplus?[61] What, can none of the many skillful index-makers that we are now employing find any trace of it? Well, let them and that rest together. But are the journals, which say nothing of the revenue, as silent on the discontent? Oh, no! a child may find it. It is the melancholy burden and blot of every page.

106. I think, then, I am, from those journals, justified in the sixth and last resolution, which is,—

> That it hath been found by experience that the manner of granting the said supplies and aids by the said general assemblies hath been more agreeable to the said colonies, and more beneficial and conducive to the public service, than the mode of giving and granting aids in Parliament, to be raised and paid in the said colonies.

This makes the whole of the fundamental part of the plan. The conclusion is irresistible. You cannot say that you were driven by any necessity to an exercise of the utmost rights of legislature. You cannot assert that you took on yourselves the task of imposing colony taxes, from the want of another legal body that is competent to the purpose of supplying the exigencies[62] of the state without wounding the prejudices of the people. Neither is it true that the body so qualified and having that competence had neglected the duty.

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[56] SANGUINE—Optimistic, hopeful.

[57] REQUISITIONS—Money asked for by grant, not imposed as a tax.

[58] GROSS—The total income.

[59] THE NET—The amount left after deduction of the expenses of collection.

[60] TO WHAT SERVICE—That is, to what branch of government.

[61] HOW HAVE YOU APPROPRIATED ITS SURPLUS?—What appropriations have been made from the surplus?

107. The question now, on all this accumulated matter, is,—whether you will choose to abide by a profitable experience or a mischievous theory; whether you choose to build on imagination or fact; whether you prefer enjoyment or hope; satisfaction in your subjects or discontent?

108. If these propositions are accepted, everything which has been made to enforce a contrary system must, I take it for granted, fall along with it. On that ground I have drawn the following resolution, which, when it comes to be moved, will naturally be divided in a proper manner:[63]—

> That it may be proper to repeal an act made in the seventh year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, "An act for granting certain duties[64] in the British colonies and plantations in America; for allowing a drawback[65] of the duties of customs upon the exportation from this kingdom, of coffee and cocoanuts of the produce of the said colonies or plantations; for discontinuing the drawbacks payable on China earthenware exported to America; and for more effectually preventing the clandestine running[66] of goods in the said colonies and plantations."—And that it may be proper to repeal an act made in the fourteenth year of

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[62] EXIGENCIES—Needs.

[63] DIVIDED IN A PROPER MANNER—Note that this resolution includes five separate resolutions. Each had to be moved and voted on separately by the Commons.

[64] AN ACT FOR GRANTING CERTAIN DUTIES, etc.—The theory that Parliament might grant revenues from taxes imposed in the colonies is implied in this title. Expanded, the title would read something as follows: An Act to enable Parliament to grant to his Majesty's government money raised by duties levied in the colonies. This was Townshend's Taxation Act of 1767, which included the tax on tea.

[65] DRAWBACK—Rebate of the duties if the produce was again exported.

[66] CLANDESTINE RUNNING—Smuggling.

the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, "An act to discontinue,[67] in such manner and for such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading or shipping, of goods, wares and merchandise, at the town and within the harbor of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in North America."—And that it may be proper to repeal an act made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, "An act for the impartial administration[68] of justice in the cases of persons questioned for any acts done by them in the execution of the law, or for the suppression of riots and tumults, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England."—And that it may be proper to repeal an act made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, "An act for the better regulating[69] the government of the province of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England."—And also, that it may be proper to explain and amend an act made in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth, entitled, "An act for the trial of treasons[70] committed out of the king's dominions."

109. I wish, Sir, to repeal the Boston Port Bill, because (independently of the dangerous precedent of suspending the rights of the subject during the king's pleasure[71]) it was passed, as I apprehend, with less regularity and on more partial principles[72] than it ought. The corporation of Boston was not heard before it was condemned. Other towns, full as guilty as she was, have not had their ports blocked up. Even the Restraining Bill[73] of the present session does not go to the length of the Boston Port Act. The same ideas of prudence which induced you not to extend equal punishment to equal guilt, even when you were punishing, induced me, who mean not to chastise but to reconcile, to be satisfied with the punishment already partially inflicted.

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[67] AN ACT TO DISCONTINUE, etc.—This was the Boston Port Bill of 1774.

[68] AND AN ACT FOR THE IMPARTIAL ADMINISTRATION, etc.—The act of 1774 permitting soldiers, officers, and other persons who in quelling riots and disturbances in the colonies might lay themselves liable to civil action for damages, to be tried in England.

[69] AN ACT FOR THE BETTER REGULATING, etc.—This act abrogated the charter of Massachusetts.

[70] AN ACT FOR THE TRIAL OF TREASONS—See Note 58 to Par. 47–64.

[71] DURING THE KING'S PLEASURE—The reopening of the port of Boston was put at the discretion of the king.

[72] WITH LESS REGULARITY AND ON MORE PARTIAL PRINCIPLES—That is, it was hasty and ill-considered legislation.

[73] RESTRAINING BILL—The "grand penal bill."

110. Ideas of prudence and accommodation to circumstances prevent you from taking away the charters of Connecticut and Rhode Island, as you have taken away that of Massachusetts Colony, though the crown has far less power[74] in the two former provinces than it enjoyed in the latter, and though the abuses have been full as great and as flagrant in the exempted as in the punished. The same reasons of prudence and accommodation have weight with me in restoring the charter of Massachusetts Bay. Besides, Sir, the act which changes the charter of Massachusetts is in many particulars so exceptionable that, if I did not wish absolutely to repeal, I would by all means desire to alter it, as several of its provisions tend to the subversion of all public and private justice. Such, among others, is the power in the governor to change the sheriff at his pleasure, and to make a new returning officer[75] for every special cause. It is shameful[76] to behold such a regulation standing among English laws.

111. The act for bringing persons accused of committing murder under the orders of government to England for trial is but temporary.[77] That act has calculated the probable duration of our quarrel with the colonies, and is accommodated to that supposed duration. I would hasten the happy moment of reconciliation; and therefore must, on my principle, get rid of that most justly obnoxious act.

112. The act of Henry the Eighth for the trial of treasons I do not mean to take away, but to confine it to its proper bounds and original intention; to make it expressly for trial of treasons (and the greatest treasons may be committed) in places where the jurisdiction of the crown does not extend.

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[74] Far less power—The king had no power of veto in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

[75] Returning officer—An officer who summoned a jury. Of course, if a sheriff made up a jury-list of men not favorable to England, the jury in any case would not find colonists guilty of offenses. The purpose in giving the governor authority to appoint a new sheriff for every case (special cause) was to enable him to get rid of sheriffs who returned juries that refused to convict colonists.

[76] Shameful—Because it was an attempt to interfere with the administration of justice and bring about unfair verdicts.

[77] Temporary—Enacted for three years.

113. Having guarded the privileges of local legislature, I would next secure to the colonies a fair and unbiased judicature;[78] for which purposes, Sir, I propose the following resolution:—

That, from the time when the general assembly, or general court, of any colony or plantation in North America shall have appointed by act of assembly duly confirmed, a settled salary to the offices of the chief justice and other judges of the superior court, it may be proper that the said chief justice and other judges of the superior courts of such colony shall hold his and their office and offices during their good behavior,[79] and shall not be removed therefrom but when the said removal shall be adjudged by his Majesty in council, upon a hearing on complaint from the general assembly, or on a complaint from the governor or council or the house of representatives, severally, of the colony in which the said chief justice and other judges have exercised the said offices.

114. The next resolution relates to the courts of admiralty. It is this:—

That it may be proper to regulate the courts of admiralty[80] or vice-admiralty authorized by the fifteenth chapter of the fourth of George the Third, in such a manner as to make the same more commodious[81] to those who sue or are sued in the said courts; and to provide for the more decent maintenance[82] of the judges in the same.

115. These courts I do not wish to take away: they are in themselves proper establishments. This court is one of the

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[78] JUDICATURE—Judicial system.

[79] DURING GOOD BEHAVIOR—The King endeavored to keep judges subservient to him by appointing them to hold office not on good behavior but at the King's pleasure only. Judges could thus be removed at will, if they did not please the King or Government.

[80] COURTS OF ADMIRALTY—These courts heard all cases of smuggling, and tried cases without a jury.

[81] MORE COMMODIOUS—More convenient. An invaluable safeguard to fair trial is found in the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States which guarantees the "right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed." The colonists complained that trials in the courts of admiralty were often far from the district where the crime alleged was committed and that it was a trial without jury—hence the courts were "incommodious."

[82] MORE DECENT MAINTENANCE—The judges were maintained by fines levied on the smuggled goods seized, thus "partaking in the fruits of its own condemnation."

capital securities of the Act of Navigation. The extent of its jurisdiction, indeed, has been increased; but this is altogether as proper, and is indeed on many accounts more eligible, where new powers were wanted, than a court absolutely new. But courts incommodiously situated in effect deny justice; and a court partaking in the fruits of its own condemnation is a robber. The Congress [83] complain, and complain justly, of this grievance.

116. These are the three consequential propositions. I have thought of two or three more; but they come rather too near detail and to the province of executive government,[84] which I wish Parliament always to superintend, never to assume. If the first six are granted, congruity [85] will carry the latter three. If not, the things that remain unrepealed will be, I hope, rather unseemly incumbrances on the building than very materially detrimental to its strength and stability.

117. Here, Sir, I should close; but I plainly perceive some objections remain, which I ought, if possible, to remove. The first will be that, in resorting to the doctrine of our ancestors as contained in the preamble to the Chester Act, I prove too much; that the grievance from a want of representation, stated in that preamble, goes to the whole of legislation as well as to taxation; and that the colonies, grounding themselves upon that doctrine, will apply it to all parts of legislative authority.

118. To this objection, with all possible deference and humility, and wishing as little as any man living to impair the smallest particle of our supreme authority, I answer that *the words are the words of Parliament, and not mine;* and that all false and inconclusive inferences drawn from them are not mine, for I heartily disclaim any such inference. I have chosen the words of an act of Parliament which Mr. Grenville, surely a tolerably zealous and very judicious advocate for the sovereignty of

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[83] THE CONGRESS—The Continental Congress.

[84] TOO NEAR DETAIL AND TO THE PROVINCE OF EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT—Burke is not engaged in his resolutions in devising plans for carrying his plan into effect—that is the work of the executive. Burke's purpose is only to inaugurate a new policy with respect to America.

[85] CONGRUITY—The necessity for being consistent.

Parliament, formerly moved to have read at your table in confirmation of his tenets.[86] It is true that Lord Chatham[87] considered these preambles as declaring strongly in favor of his opinions. He was a no less powerful advocate for the privileges of the Americans. Ought I not from hence to presume that these preambles are as favorable as possible to both, when properly understood,—favorable both to the rights of Parliament and to the privilege of the dependencies of this crown? But, Sir, the object of grievance in my resolution I have not taken from the Chester, but from the Durham Act, which confines the hardship of want of representation to the case of subsidies, and which therefore falls in exactly with the case of the colonies. But whether the unrepresented counties were *de jure* or *de facto*[88] bound, the preambles do not accurately distinguish; nor indeed was it necessary; for whether *de jure* or *de facto,* the legislature thought the exercise of the power of taxing, as of right or as of fact without right, equally a grievance and equally oppressive.

119. I do not know that the colonies have, in any general way or in any cool hour, gone much beyond the demand of immunity[89] in relation to taxes. It is not fair to judge of the temper or disposition of any man or any set of men, when they are composed and at rest, from their conduct or their expressions in a state of disturbance and irritation. It is, besides, a very great mistake to imagine that mankind follow up practically any speculative principle,[90] either of government or of freedom, as far as it will go in argument and logical illation.[91] We Englishmen stop very short of the principles upon which we support any given part of our Constitution, or even the whole of it together. I could easily, if I had not already tired you, give you very striking and convincing instances of it. This is

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[86] TENETS—His opinion that Parliament was supreme.

[87] LORD CHATHAM—The Earl of Chatham, Pitt the Elder, a Whig leader, who held that "the government of Great Britain could not lay taxes on the colonies."

[88] *De jure*—Legally. *De facto*—Actually but not legally.

[89] IMMUNITY—Freedom from.

[90] SPECULATIVE PRINCIPLE—Theory.

[91] ILLATION—Deduction

nothing but what is natural and proper. All government, indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue, and every prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter. We balance inconveniencies; we give and take; we remit some rights that we may enjoy others; and we choose rather to be happy citizens than subtle disputants. As we must give away some natural liberty to enjoy civil advantages, so we must sacrifice some civil liberties for the advantages to be derived from the communion and fellowship of a great empire. But in all fair dealings the thing bought must bear some proportion to the purchase paid. None will barter away the immediate jewel of his soul. Though a great house is apt to make slaves haughty, yet it is purchasing a part of the artificial importance of a great empire too dear to pay for it all essential rights and all the intrinsic dignity of human nature. None of us who would not risk his life rather than fall under a government purely arbitrary. But although there are some amongst us who think our Constitution wants many improvements to make it a complete system of liberty, perhaps none who are of that opinion would think it right to aim at such improvement by disturbing his country and risking everything that is dear to him. In every arduous enterprise we consider what we are to lose as well as what we are to gain: and the more and better stake of liberty every people possess, the less they will hazard in a vain attempt to make it more. These are *the cords of man.*[92] Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interest, and not on metaphysical speculations.[93] Aristotle,[94] the great master of reasoning, cautions us, and with great weight and propriety, against this species of delusive geometrical accuracy in moral arguments, as the most fallacious[95] of all sophistry.[96]

120. The Americans will have no interest contrary to the gran-

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[92] *Cords of man*—An allusion to *Hosea*, xi–4: "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."

[93] METAPHYSICAL SPECULATIONS—Abstract reasoning.

[94] ARISTOTLE—A celebrated philosopher of ancient Greece.

[95] FALLACIOUS—False, unsound.

[96] SOPHISTRY—Reasoning that on its face seems sound but in reality is not.

deur and glory of England, when they are not oppressed by the weight of it; and they will rather be inclined to respect the acts of a superintending legislature,[97] when they see them the acts of that power which is itself the security, not the rival, of their secondary importance. In this assurance my mind most perfectly acquiesces;[98] and I confess I feel not the least alarm from the discontents which are to arise from putting people at their ease; nor do I apprehend the destruction of this empire from giving, by an act of free grace and indulgence, to two millions of my fellow-citizens, some share of those rights upon which I have always been taught to value myself.

121. It is said, indeed, that this power of granting, vested in American assemblies, would dissolve the unity of the empire, which was preserved entire, although Wales and Chester and Durham were added to it. Truly, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what this unity means; nor has it ever been heard of, that I know, in the constitutional policy of this country. The very idea of subordination of parts excludes this notion of simple and undivided unity. England is the head, but she is not the head and the members too. Ireland has ever had from the beginning a separate, but not an independent, legislature, which, far from distracting, promoted the union of the whole. Everything was sweetly and harmoniously disposed through both islands for the conservation of English dominion and the communication of English liberties. I do not see that the same principles might not be carried into twenty islands, and with the same good effect. This is my model with regard to America, as far as the internal circumstances of the two countries are the same. I know no other unity of this empire than I can draw from its example during these periods when it seemed to my poor understanding more united than it is now, or than it is likely to be by the present methods.

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[97] Superintending legislature—Burke's theory of the empire was that Parliament should not legislate on the internal affairs of the colonies; it should concern itself only with imperial policies.

[98] Acquiesces—Concurs, agrees.

Unit IX

122–135. *Two additional arguments urged in support of Burke's plan. Seven reasons why Burke's plan is superior to that offered by Lord North presented.*

122. But since I speak of these methods, I recollect, Mr. Speaker, almost too late, that I promised, before I finished, to say something of the proposition of the noble lord[1] on the floor, which has been so lately received, and stands on your journals. I must be deeply concerned whenever it is my misfortune to continue a difference with the majority of this House. But as the reasons for that difference are my apology for thus troubling you, suffer me to state them in a very few words. I shall compress them into as small a body as I possibly can, having already debated that matter at large when the question was before the committee.[2]

123. First, then, I cannot admit that proposition of a ransom by auction,[3] because it is a mere project.[4] It is a thing new, unheard of, supported by no experience, justified by no analogy, without example of our ancestors or root in the Constitution. It is neither regular parliamentary taxation nor colony grant. *Experimentum in corpore vili*[5] is a good rule, which will ever make me adverse to any trial of experiments on what is certainly the most valuable of all subjects,—the peace of this empire.

124. Secondly, it is an experiment which must be fatal in the end to our Constitution. For what is it but a scheme for taxing the colonies in the antechamber of the noble lord[6] and his successors? To settle the quotas and proportions in this House is clearly impossible. You, Sir, may flatter yourself you shall sit

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[1] Noble lord—Lord North. Burke here begins a direct attack on North's *Proposals*.

[2] Committee—The house sat as a committee of the whole on Lord North's *Proposals* at the time when they were first presented to the Commons.

[3] Proposition of a ransom by auction—See Note 38, Par. 1–14.

[4] Mere project—A plan devised without reference to the circumstances of the case, an experiment.

[5] *Experimentum in corpore vili*—Let the experiment be on a worthless object.

[6] Antechamber of the noble lord—That is, in the Cabinet.

a state auctioneer with your hammer in your hand, and knock down to each colony as it bids. But to settle (on the plan laid down by the noble lord) the true proportional payment for four or five and twenty governments, according to the absolute and the relative wealth of each, and according to the British proportion of wealth and burden, is a wild and chimerical[7] notion. This new taxation must therefore come in by the back door of the Constitution. Each quota must be brought to this House ready formed. You can neither add nor alter. You must register it. You can do nothing further. For on what grounds can you deliberate either before or after the proposition? You cannot hear the counsel for all these provinces, quarrelling each on its own quantity of payment and its proportion to others. If you should attempt it, the committee of provincial ways and means, or by whatever other name it will delight to be called, must swallow up all the time of Parliament.

125. Thirdly, it does not give satisfaction to the complaint of the colonies. They complain that they are taxed without their consent: you answer that you will fix the sum at which they shall be taxed. That is, you give them the very grievance for the remedy. You tell them, indeed, that you will leave the mode to themselves. I really beg pardon; it gives me pain to mention it; but you must be sensible that you will not perform this part of the compact. For suppose the colonies were to lay the duties which furnished their contingent[8] upon the importation of your manufactures, you know you would never suffer such a tax to be laid. You know, too, that you would not suffer many other modes of taxation. So that when you come to explain yourself, it will be found that you will neither leave to themselves the quantum[9] nor the mode; nor indeed anything. The whole is delusion from one end to the other.

126. Fourthly, this method of ransom by auction, unless it be *universally* accepted, will plunge you into great and inextricable difficulties. In what year of our Lord are the proportions of

[7] CHIMERICAL—Fantastic.

[8] CONTINGENT—Quota.

[9] QUANTUM—Amount, quota.

payments to be settled? To say nothing of the impossibility that colony agents should have general powers of taxing the colonies at their discretion, consider, I implore you, that the communication by special messages and orders between these agents and their constituents on each variation of the case, when the parties come to contend together and to dispute on their relative proportions, will be a matter of delay, perplexity and confusion that never can have an end.

127. If all the colonies do not appear at the outcry,[10] what is the condition of those assemblies who offer, by themselves or their agents, to tax themselves up to your ideas of their proportion? The refractory[11] colonies who refuse all composition will remain taxed only to your old impositions, which, however grievous in principle, are trifling as to production. The obedient colonies in this scheme are heavily taxed; the refractory remain unburdened. What will you do? Will you lay new and heavier taxes by Parliament on the disobedient? Pray consider in what way you can do it. You are perfectly convinced that in the way of taxing you can do nothing but at the ports. Now suppose it is Virginia that refuses to appear at your auction, while Maryland and North Carolina bid handsomely for their ransom, and are taxed to your quota, how will you put these colonies on a par? Will you tax the tobacco of Virginia? If you do, you give its death-wound to your English revenue at home[12] and to one of the very greatest articles of your own foreign trade. If you tax the import of that rebellious colony, what do you tax but your own manufactures[13] or the goods of some other obedient and already well-taxed colony? Who has said one word on this labyrinth of detail which bewilders you more and more as you enter into it? Who has presented, who can present you with a clue to lead you out of it? I think, Sir, it is impossible that you should not recollect that the colony bounds are so implicated

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[10] OUTCRY—Public auction.

[11] REFRACTORY—Obstinate—those colonies which refuse to raise their quotas.

[12] YOUR ENGLISH REVENUE AT HOME—An import duty was laid on tobacco entering England.

[13] YOUR MANUFACTURES—That is, those who shipped goods to the colonies.

in one another (you know it by your other experiments in the bill for prohibiting the New England fishery) that you can lay no possible restraints on almost any of them which may not be presently eluded, if you do not confound the innocent with the guilty, and burden those whom, upon every principle, you ought to exonerate. He must be grossly ignorant of America who thinks that, without falling into this confusion of all rules of equity and policy, you can restrain any single colony, especially Virginia and Maryland, the central and most important of them all.

128. Let it also be considered that, either in the present confusion you settle a permanent contingent, which will and must be trifling, and then you have no effectual revenue; or you change the quota at every exigency, and then on every new repartition you will have a new quarrel.

129. Reflect besides, that when you have fixed a quota for every colony, you have not provided for prompt and punctual payment. Suppose one, two, five, ten years' arrears. You cannot issue a treasury extent[14] against the failing colony. You must make new Boston Port Bills, new restraining laws, new acts for dragging men to England for trial. You must send out new fleets, new armies. All is to begin again. From this day forward the empire is never to know an hour's tranquillity. An intestine[15] fire will be kept alive in the bowels of the colonies, which one time or other must consume this whole empire. I allow indeed that the empire of Germany raises her revenue and her troops by quotas and contingents; but the revenue of the empire and the army of the empire is the worst revenue and the worst army in the world.[16]

130. Instead of a standing revenue, you will therefore have a perpetual quarrel. Indeed, the noble lord who proposed this project of a ransom by auction seemed himself to be of that opinion. His project was rather designed for breaking the union

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[14] TREASURY EXTENT—A proceeding for taking lands to satisfy back taxes or other claims of the government.

[15] INTESTINE—Internal.

[16] WORST REVENUE AND THE WORST ARMY IN THE WORLD—Burke was speaking before the unification of Germany took place.

of the colonies than for establishing a revenue. He confessed he apprehended that his proposal would not be to *their taste*. I say this scheme of disunion seems to be at the bottom of the project; for I will not suspect that the noble lord meant nothing but merely to delude the nation by an airy phantom which he never intended to realize. But whatever his views may be, as I propose the peace and union of the colonies as the very foundation of my plan, it cannot accord with one whose foundation is perpetual discord.

131. Compare the two. This I offer to give you is plain and simple: the other full of perplexed and intricate mazes. This is mild: that harsh. This is found by experience effectual for its purposes: the other is a new project. This is universal: the other calculated for certain colonies only. This is immediate in its conciliatory operation: the other remote, contingent,[17] full of hazard. Mine is what becomes the dignity of a ruling people,—gratuitous,[18] unconditional, and not held out as a matter of bargain and sale. I have done my duty in proposing it to you. I have indeed tired you by a long discourse; but this is the misfortune of those to whose influence nothing will be conceded, and who must win every inch of their ground by argument. You have heard me with goodness. May you decide with wisdom! For my part, I feel my mind greatly disburdened by what I have done to-day. I have been the less fearful of trying your patience, because on this subject I mean to spare it [19] altogether in future. I have this comfort, that in every stage of the American affairs I have steadily opposed the measures that have produced the confusion, and may bring on the destruction, of this empire. I now go so far as to risk a proposal of my own. If I cannot give peace to my country, I give it to my conscience.

132. "But what," says the financier, "is peace to us without money? Your plan gives us no revenue." No! But it does; for it secures to the subject the power of REFUSAL, the first of all revenues. Experience is a cheat and in fact a liar, if this power

[17] CONTINGENT—Conditional.
[18] GRATUITOUS—Freely bestowed.
[19] SPARE IT—That is, spare trying your patience.

in the subject of proportioning his grant, or of not granting at all, has not been found the richest mine of revenue ever discovered by the skill or by the fortune of man. It does not indeed vote you £152,750 11*s.* 2¾ths, nor any other paltry limited sum; but it gives the strong-box itself, the fund, the bank, from whence only revenues can arise amongst a people sensible of freedom: *Posita luditur arca.*[20] Cannot you in England, cannot you at this time of day, cannot you, an House of Commons, trust to the principle which has raised so mighty a revenue and accumulated a debt of near 140 millions in this country? Is this principle to be true in England and false everywhere else? Is it not true in Ireland? Has it not hitherto been true in the colonies? Why should you presume that in any country a body duly constituted for any function will neglect to perform its duty and abdicate[21] its trust? Such a presumption would go against all governments in all modes. But in truth this dread of penury[22] of supply from a free assembly has no foundation in nature. For first observe, that besides the desire which all men have naturally of supporting the honor of their own government, that sense of dignity and that security to property which ever attends freedom has a tendency to increase the stock[23] of the free community. Most may be taken where most is accumulated. And what is the soil or climate where experience has not uniformly proved that the voluntary flow of heaped-up plenty, bursting from the weight of its own rich luxuriance, has ever run with a more copious stream of revenue than could be squeezed from the dry husks of oppressed indigence by the straining of all the politic machinery in the world?

133. Next, we know that parties must ever exist in a free country. We know, too, that the emulations[24] of such parties, their contradictions, their reciprocal necessities,[25] their hopes and their fears, must send them all in their turns to him that holds

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[20] *Posita luditur arca*—The strong-box itself is put up as a stake.

[21] Abdicate—Cast off, renounce.

[22] Penury—Want.

[23] Stock—Property, wealth.

[24] Emulations—Rivalries.

[25] Reciprocal necessities—The necessity for giving something in order to get support.

the balance of the state. The parties are the gamesters; but government keeps the table, and is sure to be the winner in the end. When this game is played, I really think it is more to be feared that the people will be exhausted than that government will not be supplied. Whereas, whatever is got by acts of absolute power, ill obeyed because odious, or by contracts ill kept because constrained,[26] will be narrow, feeble, uncertain and precarious.[27]

> Ease would retract
> Vows made in pain, as violent and void.[28]

134. I, for one, protest against compounding our demands:[29] I declare against compounding for a poor limited sum the immense, ever-growing, eternal debt which is due to generous government from protected freedom. And so may I speed in the great object I propose to you, as I think it would not only be an act of injustice, but would be the worst economy in the world, to compel the colonies to a sum certain, either in the way of ransom or in the way of compulsory compact.

135. But to clear up my ideas on this subject,—a revenue from America transmitted hither,—do not delude yourselves: you never can receive it,—no, not a shilling. We have experience that from remote countries it is not to be expected. If, when you attempted to extract revenue from Bengal, you were obliged to return in loan[30] what you had taken in imposition, what can you expect from North America? For certainly, if ever there was a country qualified to produce wealth, it is India; or an institution fit for the transmission, it is the East India Company. America has none of these aptitudes.[31] If America gives you

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[26] CONSTRAINED—Forced.

[27] PRECARIOUS—Doubtful.

[28] EASE WOULD RETRACT, etc.—Quoted with modification from *Paradise Lost*.

[29] COMPOUNDING OUR DEMANDS—Accepting a fixed sum to meet our demands. Burke implies that if the colonies are free to make grants, gratitude will prompt them to contribute more than the quotas Parliament would demand.

[30] RETURN IN LOAN—Burke refers to the fact that the Government had been obliged to lend money to the East India Company.

[31] APTITUDES—Capacities.

taxable objects[32] on which you lay your duties here, and gives you at the same time a surplus by a foreign sale of her commodities[33] to pay the duties on these objects which you tax at home, she has performed her part to the British revenue. But with regard to her own internal establishments, she may,—I doubt not she will,—contribute in moderation. I say in moderation; for she ought not to be permitted to exhaust herself. She ought to be reserved to a war,[34] the weight of which, with the enemies that we are most likely to have,[35] must be considerable in her quarter of the globe. There she may serve you, and serve you essentially.

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[32] TAXABLE OBJECTS—Articles, such as tobacco, which were taxed upon entry into Great Britain.

[33] SURPLUS BY A FOREIGN SALE OF HER COMMODITIES—That is, if the commodities received from America can be resold in foreign countries at a profit.

[34] RESERVED TO A WAR—That is, permitted to accumulate a reserve in case of war.

[35] ENEMIES THAT WE ARE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE—France and Spain.

UNIT X

136–139. *Conclusion. The eighth argument in support of the contention that England should satisfy the complaint of the colonies—the colonies are bound to England by the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges and equal protection.*

136. For that service, for all service, whether of revenue, trade or empire, my trust is in her interest in the British Constitution. My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government,—they will cling and grapple to you, and no force under heaven will be of power to tear them from their allegiance. But let it be once understood that your government may be one thing and their

privileges another; that these two things may exist without any mutual relation, the cement is gone, the cohesion[1] is loosened and everything hastens to decay and dissolution. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces[2] towards you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain; they may have it from Prussia. But until you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none but you. This is the commodity of price,[3] of which you have the monopoly. This is the true Act of Navigation which binds to you the commerce of the colonies, and through them secures to you the wealth of the world. Deny them this participation of freedom, and you break that sole bond which originally made and must still preserve the unity of the empire. Do not entertain so weak an imagination as that your registers[4] and your bonds,[5] your affidavits[6] and your sufferances,[7] your cockets[8] and your clearances,[9] are what form the great securities of your commerce. Do not dream that your letters of office[10] and your instructions[11] and your suspending clauses[12] are the things that hold together the great contexture of the mysterious whole. These things do not make your government. Dead instruments,[13] passive tools[14] as they are, it is the spirit of the English communion that gives all their life and efficacy to them. It is the spirit of the English Constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member.

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[1] COHESION—That is, the unity.

[2] TURN THEIR FACES—As the Jews turn their faces toward Jerusalem to pray.

[3] OF PRICE—That is, of great value.

[4] REGISTERS—Merchant vessels were required to be registered.

[5] BONDS—Such as an importer is required to give, guaranteeing that he will pay duty on goods held in warehouse pending disposal.

[6] AFFIDAVITS—Sworn statements in writing such as a ship captain might be required to make relative to his cargo.

[7] SUFFERANCES—Licenses or permits to ship goods.

[8] COCKETS—Certificates that goods have entered and paid duty.

[9] CLEARANCES—Permits to leave port.

[10] LETTERS OF OFFICE—Official letters of appointment to office.

[11] INSTRUCTIONS—Such as instructions to colonial governors.

[12] SUSPENDING CLAUSES—A reference probably to acts suspending or annulling the rights and privileges of the colonists.

137. Is it not the same virtue which does everything for us here in England? Do you imagine, then, that it is the Land Tax Act[15] which raises your revenue? that it is the annual vote in the Committee of Supply[16] which gives you your army? or that it is the Mutiny Bill[17] which inspires it with bravery and discipline? No! surely no! It is the love of the people: it is their attachment to their government, from the sense of the deep stake they have in such a glorious institution, which gives you your army and your navy, and infuses into both that liberal obedience without which your army would be a base rabble, and your navy nothing but rotten timber.

138. All this, I know well enough, will sound wild and chimerical[18] to the profane[19] herd of those vulgar and mechanical[20] politicians who have no place among us,—a sort of people who think that nothing exists but what is gross[21] and material; and who, therefore, far from being qualified to be directors of the great movement of empire, are not fit to turn a wheel in the machine. But to men truly initiated[22] and rightly taught, these

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[13] DEAD INSTRUMENTS—That is, these are the mere instruments of government; they do not make government.

[14] PASSIVE TOOLS—That is, they are the mere tools of government. They cannot act themselves—they are "passive."

[15] LAND TAX ACT—The annual appropriation bill for raising the budget.

[16] COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY—The committee of Parliament which made up the annual appropriation bill for the army.

[17] MUTINY BILL—An annual bill authorizing the trying of soldiers by military law.

[18] CHIMERICAL—Fantastic.

[19] PROFANE—Common.

[20] MECHANICAL—Politicians who cannot understand that men are moved by anything other than material and selfish motives.

[21] GROSS—Obvious, capable of being perceived by the senses.

[22] TRULY INITIATED—Truly initiated into the business of government, those who understand what it is that makes government possible.

ruling and master principles, which in the opinion of such men as I have mentioned have no substantial existence, are in truth everything and all in all. Magnanimity[23] in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together. If we are conscious of our situation and glow with zeal to fill our places as becomes our station and ourselves, we ought to auspicate[24] all our public proceedings on America with the old warning of the church, *Sursum corda!*[25] We ought to elevate our minds to the greatness of that trust to which the order of Providence has called us. By adverting to[26] the dignity of this high calling,[27] our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire; and have made the most extensive, and the only honorable conquests, not by destroying, but by promoting the wealth, the number, the happiness of the human race. Let us get an American revenue as we have got an American empire. English privileges have made it all that it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be.

In full confidence of this unalterable truth, I now (*quod felix faustumque sit!*[28]) lay the first stone of the Temple of Peace; and I move you,—

The First Resolution

That the colonies and plantations of Great Britain in North America, consisting of fourteen separate governments, and containing two millions and upwards of free inhabitants, have not had the liberty and privilege of electing and sending any knights and burgesses, or others, to represent them in the high court of Parliament.

The Second Resolution

That the said colonies and plantations have been made liable to, and bounden by, several subsidies, payments, rates and taxes, given and granted by Parliament, though the said colonies and plantations have not their knights and burgesses in the said high court of Parliament, of their own election, to represent the condition of their country; by lack whereof they have been oftentimes touched and grieved by subsidies given, granted and assented to, in the said court, in a manner prejudicial to the commonwealth, quietness, rest and peace of the subjects inhabiting within the same.

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[23] MAGNANIMITY—Generosity, freedom from pettiness.

[24] AUSPICATE—Give a favorable turn to by beginning.

[25] *Sursum corda!*—Lift up your hearts! It is called the "old warning of the church" since the phrase occurs in the Mass.

[26] ADVERTING TO—Being aware of.

[27] THIS HIGH CALLING—That is, the high calling of good government.

[28] *Quod felix faustumque sit!*—May it be happy and prosperous!

The Third Resolution

That, from the distance of the said colonies and from other circumstances, no method hath hitherto been devised for procuring a representation in Parliament for the said colonies.

The Fourth Resolution

That each of the said colonies hath within itself a body, chosen in part or in the whole by the freemen, freeholders or other free inhabitants thereof, commonly called the general assembly, or general court; with powers legally to raise, levy and assess, according to the several usage of such colonies, duties and taxes towards defraying all sorts of public services.

The Fifth Resolution

That the said general assemblies, general courts, or other bodies legally qualified as aforesaid, have at sundry times freely granted several large subsidies and public aids for his Majesty's service, according to their abilities, when required thereto by letter from one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state; and that their right to grant the same and their cheerfulness and sufficiency in the said grants have been at sundry times acknowledged by Parliament.

The Sixth Resolution

That it hath been found by experience that the manner of granting the said supplies and aids by the said general assemblies hath been more agreeable to the inhabitants of the said colonies, and more beneficial and conducive to the public service, than the mode of giving and granting aids in Parliament, to be raised and paid in the said colonies.

The Three Corollary Resolutions

The three corollary resolutions as printed in the body of the speech were then moved. Of the fundamental resolutions, the first four and the third of the corollary resolutions did not come to vote; the fifth and sixth of the fundamental resolutions and the first and second of the corollary resolutions came to vote but were rejected.

EDMUND BURKE

(1729–1797)

Burke was born in Dublin, January 12, 1729. His father was an attorney-at-law in comfortable circumstances, and a man of punctual honesty. Of Burke's boyhood not much is known. He was sent at about the age of twelve to the school of Abraham Shackleton at Ballitore in the County Kildare, about twenty-eight Irish miles from Dublin, a little off the high road from Dublin to Cork. The school seems to have been in all respects a good one. Its master was a Quaker, "a learned and good man, straightforward in all his dealings, and sincere in his converse with God and man." Burke always retained an affection for the school, and a high regard for its master.

Richard Shackleton, son of the Quaker to whom Burke was sent to school, is authority for the statement that "Edmund was a lad of most promising genius, of an inquisitive and speculative cast of mind. . . . He read much while he was a boy, and accumulated a stock of learning of a great variety. . . . He made the reading of the *classics* his diversion rather than his business. He was particularly delighted with history and poetry," and while at school tried his hand at verse. An incident of his school days gives evidence of those characteristics which the activities of manhood were to display—a hatred of injustice and a quick sympathy with human misfortune and suffering. When one of the villagers of Ballitore was compelled by a surveyor of roads to pull down his cottage, Burke tried to organize a party of his schoolmates to rebuild it.

The day after Burke left Ballitore he was admitted into the University of Dublin, where he took his bachelor's degree from Trinity College in 1748. "Though the course of study which then obtained there was not at all adapted to his taste, yet he went through the College exercises with reputation and success." Though in college, Burke was doing what every man must do in college or out—he was educating himself. His reading followed no course of study—probably no course could be devised which would be adapted to such a mind as his. Of his reading he himself wrote, "First I was greatly taken with natural philosophy, which, while I should have given my mind to logic, employed me incessantly. This I call my *furor* [madness] *mathematicus*. But this worked off as soon as I began to read it in college, as men by repletion cast off their stomachs all they have eaten. Then I turned back to logic and metaphysics. Here I remained a good while, and with much pleasure; and this was my *furor logicus*. . . . Next succeeded the *furor historicus*, which also had its day, but is now no more, being entirely absorbed in the *furor poeticus*." Though Burke followed no course of study, he read hard, spending three hours almost every day in the public library, following his own inclinations, and giving evidence of that intellectual curiosity and desire to take all knowledge to be his province, which is reflected on every page of the *Speech on Conciliation.* Whatever Burke wrote reveals a mind enriched by a wide acquaintance with human affairs. His illustrations and his striking metaphors come from the history of Spain, from the mythology of Greece and Rome, from astronomy, from medicine, from stories of discovery and exploration, in fact, from the whole range of human thought and activity. The *Speech on Conciliation* is replete with quotations and phrases from the Bible, from Shakespeare and Milton, from Horace and Juvenal and Vergil. He wrote, it is said, with a "ragged Delphian Vergil" at his elbow, and there seems hardly a subject into which his inquisitive mind did not pry.

In 1750 he went to England to study law, but he does not seem to have made the systematic progress which paternal expectations demanded, and his father cut off his allowance. While he no doubt read in the law as he did in everything else, and seems to have been well grounded in it, he never was admitted to the bar. After his allowance had been discontinued, Burke took to "that resource of the sons of Adam who are otherwise failed, viz. the pen." Writing yielded a bare living, but a considerably increased reputation. In 1759 his abilities came to the notice of a successful politician of the day, William Gerard Hamilton, generally known as "Single-speech" Hamilton from the fact that he began his career in the Commons with an eloquent piece of oratory which he never afterwards duplicated during his twenty years in the House.

Burke served Hamilton as a kind of secretary for about six years. It was evidently not a labor of love. Burke spoke of the connection as a "formal, direct, and undisguised slavery." He complained that Hamilton took him "from every pursuit of literary reputation and the improvement of . . . [his] fortune." It was no doubt a constant source of irritation to Burke that for a mere livelihood he was by force of circumstances obliged to place his brains at the service of a rather mediocre man whose chief gift seems to have been an ability to get on in the world.

Shortly after his break with Hamilton, Burke became private secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham—a connection that was to give him the opportunity to improve his fortune which he felt would never come in the service of Hamilton. The latter was himself somewhat of an adventurer, but Rockingham was a man of great wealth, an outstanding Whig, and the head of a great house. Here was a connection worth improving, and Burke set about the task with diligence and energy. It should be remembered that in his day the course which Burke chose was about the only one open to a man in his circumstances. The government of England was still essentially aristocratic. Members were sent to the Commons not by popular election as they are today, but in many cases by the great landowners who controlled the districts which were entitled to representation. For example, in 1793, the Duke of Norfolk had eleven seats in his gift. To a man, therefore, like Burke, who was without influence and wealth of his own, there was hardly any other way open. Burke made himself useful to Rockingham, and when the latter became prime minister in 1765, he saw to it that Burke had a seat in Parliament. Burke took his seat in the House early in 1766. His first speech was made in favor of the repeal of the Stamp Act. It was an age which had a relish for oratory, and Burke's speeches "filled the town with wonder."

When the Rockingham ministry fell, Burke, whose abilities were now known, might have formed another profitable "connection," but he chose to stand by the Rockingham Whigs. It was a time when no one would have blamed him had he sold his services to the highest bidder. Rockingham himself suggested to Burke that he was free to improve his fortune in other quarters if he chose. Instead, he turned his efforts to keeping the Rockingham Whigs together and leading their opposition in the Commons.

Burke's career in the House covered a period of twenty-eight years, from 1766 to 1794. To give anything approaching an adequate account of Burke's public life and activities would require one to write a political history of the period. The significant point is, as one writer puts it, that "during his career he rendered more important service to humanity than any other man of his time in Europe." He maintained a constant attachment to the principles of the "glorious Revolution." He was the foe of injustice and oppression. His voice was heard not only against the unjust and ungenerous policy which drove America to revolt. It was raised against the slave-trade, against the predatory administration of India by the East India Company, and against restrictions on the trade of Ireland. Singularly enough, he was no sympathizer with democracy as we understand it. He was opposed to Parliamentary Reform, and he was a bitter enemy of Revolutionary France. His position on both these matters is not surprising, for he was fundamentally a conservative. His faith was grounded in the tried and established, and he looked with suspicion on anything which did not have experience in its favor.

Burke's hatred of Revolutionary France became an obsession. The tendency of the Whigs to sympathize with the principles of the Revolution drove Burke from them, so that in the closing days of his career he was practically a man without a party.

Although he was, especially in his earlier years in the House, what might be called the animating spirit of the Whigs, and for a period of nearly twenty-five years had more influence than perhaps any other man in shaping the policy of his party, Burke never had a seat in the Cabinet. He was perhaps temperamentally unsuited for such a place. Once he was a Privy Councillor, and twice, for short periods, Paymaster of the Forces. This last position was an exceedingly lucrative one. Burke, however, refused to accept certain moneys which his predecessors had pocketed without scruple. He introduced a number of reforms into the administration of the Paymastership, and saved the government hundreds of thousands of pounds. It has been estimated that he himself might have enjoyed an income of £23,000 a year in the office. This he cut to £4,000, despite the fact that he was sorely in need of money, as he was, in fact, all his life.

Burke's attitude toward the French Revolution seems in the eyes of George III to have compensated for all the unkind things Burke had said of the King's American policy, for George III himself proposed, on Burke's retirement from the House, to raise him to the peerage as Lord Beaconsfield. But before the proposal could be carried out, the death of Burke's only son, to whom he was dearly attached, seems to have destroyed whatever attraction the honor might have had for him.

High school students who are perturbed by the philosophical depth of Burke and by the wealth of allusion which the *Speech on Conciliation* contains may find some consolation in the fact that Burke generally spoke over the heads of the members of the House. Although he exhibited at times power to move men by his oratory, it seems also to be true that his lengthy and somewhat philosophical dissertations sometimes emptied the benches. But it should be remembered that he not infrequently spoke to men who had already made up their minds on the question under discussion, and it is only human nature that men should not find one with whom they differ so pleasant to listen to as one with whom they agree. Burke was evidently not a man of prepossessing appearance. The historian Green says of him, "The heavy Quaker-like figure, the scratch wig, the round spectacles, the cumbrous roll of paper which loaded Burke's pocket, gave little promise of a great orator and less of the characteristics of his oratory." He spoke with a somewhat harsh voice and a pronounced Irish brogue, and on occasion he was likely to mar his speech by violent outbursts of temper which led him to undignified and improper abuse. But whatever the facts with respect to Burke's oratory, and the testimony is confused, it would seem that men who found him difficult to listen to read and re-read his speeches with ardent appreciation.

Burke's private life seems to have been on the whole a happy one, although it was haunted by the ever-present spectre of debt. Shortly after his entry into Parliament, he purchased probably with the substantial assistance of Rockingham a house and estate of about six hundred acres of land, in Buckinghamshire, twenty-four miles from London. The estate cost him more than £20,000. Here he kept open house for the less fortunate. It was an asylum of refuge for such men of genius as the poet Crabbe whom Burke found pacing the streets of London "with a friend . . . and without bread," for French emigrés driven from their home-land by the Revolution, and for his own poor relations. The fact that he was never out of debt seems never one whit to have abated his generosity or to have cooled the sympathy which he naturally had for the suffering and the unfortunate.

Burke's personality was not an eccentric one. Of course, he was no ordinary individual. His learning and his great abilities marked him off from the general run of men, and earned him the respect of friend and foe alike. He was a member of Dr. Johnson's famous club, and was held in high esteem by the Doctor, who professed himself a Tory of the Tories and held that the first Whig was the devil. Burke's tastes were simple, and he was temperate in all his habits. His one peculiarity seems to have been drinking quantities of water as hot as he could stand it. He was a man of sanguine temperament and somewhat fiery temper, at times impetuous and vehement. "Every man with him," once said an acquaintance, "was either god or devil." But he does not seem ever to have harbored a grudge or to have displayed a vindictive spirit. There was nothing petty or mean about him. He was himself quite human and he knew how to make allowance for human frailties. His niece once remonstrated with him for giving sixpence to a beggar. "He will only spend it on gin," she said. The reply was characteristic. "Well, my dear, if gin be of any comfort to him, let him have gin." He was perhaps the most industrious man in public life in his day. He never was satisfied until he had gone to the bottom of whatever business he had in hand. But whoever would understand him aright, must know that perhaps his most outstanding characteristic was a love of order which amounted to a kind of sacred veneration for whatever was established.

Burke retired from Parliament in 1794. The hopes of his declining years were bound up in his son, Richard, who in 1794 was returned to Parliament from the borough of Malton which Burke himself had long represented. The death of Richard in August of that year, however, was a blow from which he never recovered. He frequented his old haunts no more, and lived in retirement at Beaconsfield until his death July 8, 1797. His wife, the faithful companion of over forty years, survived him and succeeded before her death some fifteen years later in clearing his name from debt.

WHY READ BURKE'S *SPEECH?*

"Why do we have to read Burke's *Speech?*" is a question which countless schoolboys have put to innumerable teachers. The responsibility for Burke's being in the course of study can be laid, so the story goes, at the door of one man—John Hancock of Revolutionary fame, wealthy Boston merchant and President of the Continental Congress, whom to warn of the approaching redcoats Paul Revere made his historic ride. It is said that through the influence of John Hancock, who was so impressed by Burke's *Speech* that he felt that every schoolboy should know it, the *Speech* was introduced into the course of study of the Boston Latin School. At a later date, when Harvard College laid down the requirement that entering students should have read certain English classics, Burke's *Speech* was included on the list. Other colleges followed the lead of Harvard, and in due time, the *Speech* came to be almost universally required for college entrance.

Tradition—the fact that Burke's *Speech*, has, so to speak, always been in the course of study—has no doubt been a powerful influence in keeping it there, but it is safe to say that tradition alone would not keep the *Speech* in the curriculum if it had no merits of its own to recommend it.

In the first place, whoever reads Burke comes into contact with an *orderly* mind. It was a mind that knew how to see clear and think straight—qualities which every student ought to possess. It was moreover, a *practical* mind. Burke was impatient of theories, especially with mere theories of government. When confronted with the question as to what ought in any case to be done, he was guided not by theories as to what would be desirable but by what the facts in the case clearly showed to be the best and most practical. It was a mind, furthermore, that understood human nature in the mass. Burke knew the motives which actuate men as a whole, especially men of the English race, in the daily round, and he understood better than any man in the political life of his time how a people like the Americans must be handled. Whoever aspires to a career in politics could hardly find a better guide to human nature than Burke. Thirdly, Burke knew how to express himself with accuracy and with clarity. The student who reads the *Speech* carefully and intelligently until he makes contact with the mind of the author cannot help developing himself some of those qualities which distinguish the mind of Burke. As Burke himself observes in the course of his speech, *Abeunt studia in mores*—Studies pass into character. The ability to think clearly on political questions is certainly an indispensable element in good citizenship especially under such a government as ours, where everyone has a voice in the determination of public questions.

HOW TO READ BURKE'S *SPEECH*

How to read Burke to get the most from him calls for consideration. At the outset, it should be said that the purpose in reading the *Speech* is not to memorize the outline. The student should fix his attention on Burke's thinking—on the way his mind works. The purpose of the outline is to help the reader follow Burke's thinking. The student should first try to arrive at an understanding of the problem which confronted Burke, and then read to see how Burke met the problem.

It is first necessary to know something of the circumstances out of which the *Speech* grew. When did Burke speak? How did he come to speak at that time? Why did he speak as he did? These are questions which the student should be able to answer before beginning his reading.

The *Speech* was delivered in the House of Commons on March 22, 1775, less than a month before the Battle of Lexington. The immediate occasion was the return to the Commons from the House of Lords of what Burke calls in his opening "the grand penal bill." This legislation was originated by the Prime Minister, Lord North, in February, 1775. It had for its purpose retaliating against the colonies for the non-importation agreement. Since the colonies refused to trade with the mother country, Lord North proposed to forbid them to trade with any other country. It was this feature, which savored of punishment, that led Burke to call it a *penal* bill. The bill as first passed by the Commons was directed only against the four New England colonies. It was returned by the Lords, who thought that some other colonies ought to be included under its provisions. This threw the whole question open to discussion again, and gave Burke an opportunity to make his plea for conciliation.

In speaking for a policy which would pacify the colonies, Burke was giving utterance to long-standing convictions on colonial administration. From his first entry into Parliament, he had vigorously opposed the policies of various ministers who had sought by restrictive and coercive measures to regulate the American colonies. Some account of those policies,which are familiar in a general way, to every American schoolboy, is given in the section entitled *The Historical Background of Burke's Speech.* Here it is sufficient to say that Burke regarded them as dangerous to liberty, impractical, unjust, and ungenerous.

The *Speech* as here printed has been divided into units or assignments. It is suggested that it be studied a unit at a time. In reading each unit or section, keep in mind the questions: (1) What is the author trying to do in this part of his speech, and (2) What is the relationship of this unit to what went before and to the speech as a whole The footnotes carry explanations necessary to understanding the text. At the end of the speech will be found comment by paragraphs.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF BURKE S *SPEECH*

The immediate occasion for the *Speech on Conciliation* is set forth in the opening paragraph, but to understand how Burke came to make such a speech at all, one must know something of two things. These two things are the political situation in England in 1775, and Edmund Burke himself. Of Burke something will be found in another place. It is the purpose here to connect the *Speech* with the politics of the day.

The roots of the story go well back into English history. In 1688 as a result of what Burke calls the "glorious Revolution" James II was deposed from the throne of England. Among the grievances against James was his attempt to make himself independent of Parliament. In his stead, William of Orange, Stadtholder of the Netherlands, a grandson of Charles I of England, was offered the throne. Parliament took the occasion to embody in a Declaration of Rights certain fundamental principles of political liberty, and William was required to accept this Declaration before being proclaimed king. The Declaration was incorporated in a Bill of Rights passed by Parliament in 1689. Among other things, this Bill of Rights condemned the levying of taxes without the consent of Parliament, the keeping of a standing army in times of peace, and interference with the administration of justice. It was on the whole a definition of those "rights of Englishmen" which the colonies complained had been violated in their case by the government of George III.

The Bill of Rights also established the supremacy of the acts of Parliament over the king's proclamations. This meant that the ministers of the Crown—those whom he chose to carry on the government and who constituted his Cabinet—were to be henceforth responsible not to the king but to the Parliament. This was the beginning of ministerial responsibility and of cabinet government. Henceforth no minister and no cabinet could hold office if Parliament refused its support.

Cabinet government tended to hasten the development of two political parties—Whig and Tory—which began to take form about this time. The Tories were those in general who supported the old order of things and the authority of the king, while the Whigs manifested a tendency to reform, supported the supremacy of Parliament, and were sympathetic toward political liberty. The "glorious Revolution" was on the whole a triumph of Whig principles. It must not be supposed, however, that the party system was well developed.

The system of cabinet government was, by accident so to speak, greatly strengthened under George I (1714-1724), the first king of the House of Brunswick, as Burke refers to him, but generally referred to as of the House of Hanover. William's successor, Queen Anne, left no descendants, and on her death the throne went to George I, a great-grandson of James I, who was at the time Elector of Hanover. George I chose only Whigs as his advisers. He seems to have cared more for Hanover than for England, and he was frequently absent from the realm. He understood little English, and he rarely, if ever, attended meetings of the Cabinet. The result of all these circumstances was that the influence of the king diminished and that of the ministers increased. George II (1727-1760), in the main, continued the policy of his father. Thus it happened that the Whigs ruled England for a long period. During this time the great Whig statesman, Sir Robert Walpole, was Prime Minister for twenty-one years. Although Walpole maintained a majority in Parliament by methods which would not be countenanced today, his administration was marked by a tremendous expansion in the commerce and material prosperity of England. Walpole saw that import and export duties hampered trade and he removed hundreds of them. He even permitted the colonies in some cases to trade with other European nations direct, and he never concerned himself overmuch with the enforcement of the Navigation Acts. The great growth in colonial commerce noted by Burke must in a great measure be credited to the policy of Walpole.

With the accession of George III in 1760 a new policy was inaugurated at home and abroad. George III, the grandson of George II, had been born and educated in England. His education had been such as to give him a somewhat exalted idea of his position as king, and he came to the throne determined to rule as well as to reign. At home his plan was to get back into his own hands the power which had passed into the hands of the Cabinet, and to break up the party system. He differed from James in that instead of trying to make himself independent of Parliament, he set out to build up by the methods employed by Walpole, a party of "king's friends" who would support him and his policies. His scheme was successful and he broke the power of the Whigs. Burke was a Whig—the brains of the party in his day—and here is one reason why we find him in such strenuous opposition to George III and his ministers. The sympathy of the Whigs generally was with the colonies, for they felt that the Americans were only contending for the Whig principles which had been established by the "glorious Revolution."

From the days of the "glorious Revolution" down to the accession of George III, the policy toward the colonies may be pretty accurately described in Burke's words. It was one of "salutary neglect." Walpole's policy of "hands-off business" had left the colonies to do about as they wished, and other ministers had been too much occupied with wars against the great power of France to devote much attention to the colonies. By 1760, however, France had been driven from the New World and England felt secure.

At the time of the Peace of Paris which ended the war with France, the public debt, as Burke says, stood at 140 millions. The problem of finance confronted the government. It occurred to George Grenville, who became Prime Minister in 1763, that the colonies might be made to contribute more revenue, and he rushed in where such men as Walpole had feared to tread. He revived some of the "sleeping trade laws," but his chief claim to fame is that he was the author of the Stamp Act of 1765.

Grenville, a stanch advocate of Parliamentary supremacy, was by no means a tool of George III, but George who welcomed opportunities for exercising the royal powers, supported Grenville's colonial policy. When Burke declared that "a great Empire and little minds go ill together" he might well have had George III in mind, for the King's make-up exhibited little generosity or magnanimity. He could not see as Burke saw that "If America gives you taxable objects on which to lay your duties here [that is, when imported into England], and gives you at the same time a surplus by a foreign sale of her commodities to pay the duties on these objects which you tax at home, she has performed her part to the British revenue." He could not understand that there was anything to government but laws. He possessed one of those "mechanical minds" upon which Burke poured his scorn. It seemed to him that he was no king unless he was perpetually making people do things. He was an obstinate thick-head who failed utterly to understand the temper and character of the English either in Old England or New England.

Grenville's system alarmed the colonies. Every schoolboy knows what a tempestuous whirlwind of opposition the Stamp Act raised in

America. In 1765, Grenville who was disliked by George III, was forced out of office, and the King reluctantly made the Marquis of Rockingham Prime Minister. Rockingham was a Whig, and it was as a private secretary to this nobleman that Burke made his entry into Parliament in 1766. The Rockingham Ministry repealed the Stamp Act but Parliament insisted on accompanying the repeal by a Declaratory Act asserting the right of Parliament to tax the colonies. The colonists, however, were overjoyed by the repeal of the Stamp Act, and returned to their "former unsuspecting confidence" in the mother country.

The Rockingham Ministry, however, was short-lived. It was followed by another Whig ministry under Lord Chatham, who was of the opinion that England had no right to tax America. The Whigs, however, were divided by jealousies, Chatham was far from being a well man, and in 1767 there succeeded a composite ministry under the Duke of Grafton, with a Tory noble as Secretary of State. Charles Townshend, the moving spirit of this new ministry, renewed the attempts to tax America. Townshend was the author of the revenue act which Burke proposed to repeal in the first of his corollary resolutions (Paragraph 108). It laid a duty on glass, red and white lead, painters' colors, paper, and tea imported into America. This revenue law revived alarm in the colonies. Other acts of the Grafton ministry, such as interference with the colonial legislatures of New York and Massachusetts, the sending of troops to Boston, and the revival of an act for the sending of persons accused of treason to England for trial (see paragraphs 108, 112) intensified feeling in America.

In 1770, a new ministry, headed by Lord North, came into power. This ministry marks the triumph of the King's policy. North was willing to be the obedient servant of the King. His policy with respect to the colonies was dictated by George III. The historian Green says, "His fixed purpose was to seize on the first opportunity of undoing the 'fatal compliance of 1766' (the repeal of the Stamp Act by the Rockingham Whigs)." The Boston Massacre signalized the incoming of the new ministry under the leadership of the "noble lord in the blue ribbon." The Boston Tea Party furnished the pretext for the passage of the five "Intolerable Acts" which included the three Burke proposed to repeal in his corollary resolutions. (See Paragraphs 46, 108, 109, 110, 111). The North ministry also was responsible for the other complaints of the colonists—the appointment of judges for the King's pleasure only (see Paragraph 113) and the dissolution of the Virginia assembly (see Paragraph 45). The King was delighted with North's policy. He wrote to the minister, "The die is cast. The Colonies must either triumph or submit."

The crowning act in this comedy of errors was the "grand penal bill." The scheme embodied in this bill shows how little either North or his royal master understood America. It proposed that the colonial assemblies should say how much they would give to be free from taxation imposed by Parliament, and provided that if a colony did not give enough to satisfy the home government then it should be taxed. It would be difficult to find in the history of the world a more ridiculous and childish piece of legislation. Burke adequately described it with the contempt it deserved by calling it a "ransom by action" in which the colonists were offered an opportunity to come up and bid for their freedom. This was the scheme which called forth Burke's speech on March 22, 1775.

North called his scheme *Propositions for Conciliating the Differences with America.* Burke's great plea against this piece of folly fell on deaf ears. Parliament from a variety of motives supported North. Various arguments advanced in favor of North's policy are referred to in the footnotes and comment. Some felt that the trade of the colonies should be restricted, others that America should at least yield enough revenue to support the military and civil establishment its government necessitated, the King and his friends had some ideas about maintaining the unity of the Empire, others thought that America was disobedient and ungrateful and needed spanking after the fashion of a spoiled child, and many, including Grenville, held that the supremacy of Parliament was at stake. From this variety of motives, probably all of them sincere enough, Parliament voted to support the disastrous policy of North and King George III.

Burke, Lord Chatham, and some others saw clearly enough that it was a common attachment to English privileges and to the principles of the "glorious Revolution" which held the Empire together. These men felt that in order to deny freedom to the Americans it would be necessary to declare against the very principles which secured freedom to men in England. Burke was certainly right in feeling that sentiment for independence was not at the bottom of the quarrel—that it was fundamentally a contest to secure the "rights of Englishmen," but he also saw that the course Parliament had entered upon would drive the Americans into separation. Warnings of this, echo through his *Speech.* Burke felt that more valuable to the Empire than revenue was the preservation of the spirit which had made America. To such minds as those of North and King George III, such talk was nonsense. There is a saying of the ancients that against stupidity even the gods themselves cannot prevail, and it would be difficult to find in the affairs of men a better illustration of the truth of this proverb than the English policy with respect to the American colonies.

COMMENT AND STUDY SUGGESTIONS

In following Burke's thought, your greatest difficulty will probably be Burke's language. His vocabulary is formidable, and his style formal and intellectual. Make an honest attempt to master each paragraph. It is not easy reading, but no one ever developed hard teeth by eating nothing but cake. Allusions and unusual and difficult words are explained in the footnotes. Much of your difficulty will result from the fact that a complete appreciation of Burke requires on the part of the reader a maturity of experience and an acquaintance with human affairs in which high school students are probably deficient. Yet Burke's observations on human nature are not wholly beyond you; they can usually be illustrated from your own experience.

It is the purpose of the comment and suggestions below to help you follow Burke's thought and to guide you to recognition and appreciation of those qualities of heart and mind which in our day as in his distinguish the statesman from the mere politician. How well Burke understood the American situation, history was soon to demonstrate. His observations on America are still helpful in understanding it, and his comment on men and human nature is as valid today as it was in 1775. His *Speech* is a masterpiece of argumentation, and one can learn how to order an argument from an analysis of it, but the *Speech* has values for the general reader too. Far more important than the memorization of the outline is the realization of the wisdom which lies behind such statements as: "Plain good intention, which is as easily discovered at the first view as fraud is surely detected at last, is, let me say of no mean force in the government of mankind."

UNIT I (PARAGRAPHS 1–14)

These paragraphs constitute the *Introduction.* Here Burke is engaged in clearing the ground, so to speak, for this argument.

1. Burke begins by explaining why it is that he has chosen this time to speak on American affairs. The piece of legislation, which with mild satire he calls "the grand penal bill," has been returned by the Lords for reconsideration. This return opens the whole question anew. It seems to Burke an act of Providence and a kind of warning to reconsider the American question before it is too late.

2. In this paragraph Burke begins a review of the history of the question which extends through Paragraph 4. He calls attention to the seriousness of the subject, and says that inasmuch as he was impressed upon his entry into the House both with the seriousness of it and with

the great responsibility of having a share in making a decision with respect to America he has taken uncommon pains to inform himself on colonial matters. There is in this paragraph an often quoted expression —"blown about by every wind of fashionable doctrine." What does it mean? Can you apply it to a situation within your observation or experience? Incidentally, it reveals Burke's acquaintance with the Bible. (see *Ephesians*, iv. 14). What does the closing sentence of the paragraph mean? How would you express the same idea? Put the idea in your own words and compare your sentence with Burke's. What differences do you note? Can you discover the secret of Burke's effectiveness?

3. Burke says that when he entered the House (1766) he was in agreement with the majority. In 1766 the Whigs were in control of the House. It was this Whig Government which repealed the Stamp Act. What reason does Burke give for having continued in his original sentiments?

4. Burke refers to the numerous changes made in American policy in the interval between 1766 and 1775. See in this connection the *Historical Background of Burke's Speech.* Do you think the policy of Parliament consistent or well thought out? What criticism of your own would you make on the English policy toward the colonies between 1766 and 1775? What facts from our history can you call up to illustrate the statement that America was kept "in continual agitation"?

5. Here Burke explains why he has decided to propose a policy with respect to America. See the footnotes, especially Note 23.

6. Burke implies that he has felt some hesitancy in proposing a policy. His feeling was that it was going too far for a single individual to take upon himself the business of framing "plans of government." Find the sentence in which he expresses this opinion. What reasons does he give for such an opinion? Do you agree with him? Why?

7. The first sentence of this paragraph reveals one of Burke's outstanding characteristics—his distaste for the theoretical. What does he mean by "paper government"? Do you think that if Burke had been in Brutus's place in *Julius Cæsar* he would have been drawn into the conspiracy? Why? Burke says that in spite of the fact that he feels it out of place for a single individual to offer a plan of government, the circumstances are such that he feels it necessary to do so. What was the condition of affairs in America on March 22, 1775? What does Burke mean by saying: "Public calamity is a mighty leveller"? Can you give an illustration?

8. Burke says in effect that he has gained some confidence from the thought that to restore order to a great empire is an undertaking which should make men view without criticism the efforts of even the

most ordinary intelligence ("meanest understanding"). He says further that since he can bring no influence to bear in behalf of his proposition, Parliament can judge it and act upon it according to its merits.

9. This paragraph contains what is called in the technical language of debate *the definition of terms*. Burke says that his intention is to bring about peace with the colonies. The student should remember that there were other ways in which this peace might have been achieved. The mother country tried finally, as we all know, to bring about peace by force of arms. Burke defines the kind of peace which he hopes to bring to pass. This paragraph is often quoted in rhetorics as an example of defining a thing by telling what it isn't. He notes four ways of dealing with the colonies which might result in peace. Can you give illustrations from history of (1) peace achieved by war? (2) a peace achieved or attempted by endless negotiations? (3) a peace achieved by splitting the opposition and subduing the parts? (4) a peace achieved by legal definition of the rights of each party? Do you think that Burke means that a lasting and beneficial peace can never be achieved by any of these four methods, or that none of these four methods could bring about peace with America? What was Burke's method? See Footnote 42. From what you know of our history, do you think Burke's plan would have succeeded? See the *Historical Background of Burke's Speech.*

10. Burke sets forth the "simple grounds" upon which his plan is based. Note the "simple grounds" in the sentence beginning: (1) "Refined policy has ever been the parent of confusion . . . ," (2) "Plain good intention . . . ," (3) "Genuine simplicity of heart. . . ." What does each statement mean? Do you believe these principles? Can you give illustrations of them from your own experience? He closes the paragraph by telling what his plan will not do. This is effective argument. It is often better to tell what your policy will not do than to attempt to tell what it will do.

11. This paragraph illustrates good strategy in argument. Burke scores a point by showing that his opponent favors conciliation. See Footnote 51. He does not have to prove, therefore, that conciliation is desirable; he has only to prove that his method of conciliation is preferable to North's.

12. Burke presses his point further. He is anticipating the argument, which he had heard in former debates, that America should submit before conciliation was held out. He shows that the House has already declared conciliation possible *previous* to submission. He refers here to the fact that the House passed Lord North's *Propositions for Conciliating*

the Differences with America. Burke is perhaps straining a point here, for he is not using the term *conciliation* in quite the same sense in which North intended it. North's idea of conciliation was restoring tranquillity in the colonies by making the colonists submit. Burke's idea, it will be seen, was quite different. Burke also makes a point of the fact that North's *Propositions* exempted from Parliamentary taxation those colonies which made their contributions. See Footnote 6 and reference thereunder. This exemption he contends is an admission by the House that taxation of the colonies is "reprehensible." This exemption plan is the "capital alteration" made in the original plan, or "former mode." The "mode that is altogether new" and at variance with the "ancient methods and forms of Parliament" is North's contribution scheme.

13. Burke says in effect that the important thing is that the House has admitted the *principle* of conciliation, or in other words, that the House agrees in *principle* with him. In the second sentence he states his disapproval of North's means of achieving conciliation, and announces his intention of proving that his plan is superior. Note that he keeps emphasizing the "admitted principle." He next goes on to anticipate the contention that America should make concessions, and disposes of this argument on the ground that "The superior power may offer peace with honor and safety." What do you think of the declaration that "the concessions of the weak are the concessions of fear"? Is this true? Can you give illustrations from your own experience?

14. Burke has now explained the occasion for this speech, given the history of the question, defined his terms, and pointed out to what extent he agrees with his opponent and where he differs with him. He has narrowed the question down, as we say, and now comes to a statement of what in the language of debate are called the *issues,* which are two: "first, whether you ought to concede; and secondly, what your concession ought to be." He has completed his *Introduction* and is on the threshold of the *Body* of his argument. Read carefully the sentence beginning "Indeed, Sir, to enable us . . ." Here again one sees the *practical* nature of Burke's thinking. The policy toward America must be based upon facts—it must be what the facts and circumstances call for, not what theories of government might indicate as right or desirable. What president of the United States said, "It is a condition and not a theory which confronts us"? What did he mean? Does the remark apply to the situation which confronted Parliament?

At this point it would be well to pause for a discussion of the *Introduction.* First of all, what has Burke said? Before trying to answer this question it might be well for you briefly to state Burke's problem, for he was endeavoring to convince the Commons that he had a solution. What then was the problem? America was in a turmoil. The *Speech* was given on the eve of the Revolution. In less than a month the Battle of Lexington was fought. The majority of Burke's hearers sincerely believed that the American colonies were ungrateful and that they wanted British protection but that they were unwilling to bear their share of the burden. Parliament had attempted for nearly ten years to force the colonies to pay what it believed was their share. The majority of the Commons also believed sincerely enough that the colonies existed for the benefit of the mother country, and that colonial trade and commerce should be regulated so that it would not compete with that of England. The colonists felt that the attempts on the part of Parliament to regulate trade and to lay taxes were unjust and in violation of the ancient rights of Englishmen. Burke saw that Parliament was making blunder after blunder. He understood the temper of America, and he knew enough of human nature to know that the policy of Parliament would lead to disaster. His problem was to convince the Commons that its American policy was wrong. He saw the seriousness of the situation. No wonder that he was "superstitious," that he looked upon the "return of the grand penal bill" as an act of Providence giving Parliament one last chance to rectify its mistakes. To get the full effect, therefore, of what Burke is saying, it is necessary to read with his problem in mind.

If you were to make an outline of the *Speech* thus far, how would you go about it? Making such an outline is not difficult. It can be done quickly by the class as a whole. (I) The first point comes in answer to the question: How did Burke come to make his speech on March 22, 1775? Find the sentence in Paragraph 1 which tells. (II) Burke next passes to the history of the question—of this "awful subject," as he calls it. We may get a summary of his points by answering the questions: (1) When did he first come in contact with the American question? (2) Has he been interested in it? (3) Has he formed a definite opinion and held to it? (4) What has been the policy of Parliament? (5) What has been the effect of Parliament's policy on America? (III) Next, in Paragraphs 5–8, Burke explains why as a member of the Opposition he is doing the unusual thing of advancing a plan for dealing with America. Answer the questions: (1) What must the Opposition do and why? (2) What is Burke's own feeling about bringing forward a plan? (3) Why, nevertheless, does he come out with a plan? (4) What advantage does he hope to derive from his having no influence? (IV) He next states his proposition and defines it. What is his plan? Is it a simple or a complex plan? What are some of its characteristics? (V) Burke's next step is to point out that the government has admitted the idea of conciliation. (1) What advantage does Burke's plan derive from the proposition of North's *Proposals?* (2) from the action of the House in passing North's *Proposals?* (VI) After stating his plan Burke points out that he agrees with both North and the House in principle. How does he differ from them? What does he propose to do to effect reconciliation? (VII) In Paragraph 14, Burke states the issues. What are they?

If you can read well enough to answer these questions, you have the outline. All that remains to be done is to put your answers in order, and then you can see what Burke has said—you will have an outline, something as follows:

Introduction (1–14)

I (The occasion for the speech. Paragraph 1.) Why did Burke speak at this time?
II (The history of the question. Paragraphs 2–4.) It is an "awful subject."
  1. (When did Burke first come in contact with the American question?
  2, 3, 4, 5. (Answer the questions above.)
III (The present state of the question. Paragraphs 5–8.) What must the Opposition do?
  1. (Why?)
  2, 3, 4. (See questions 2, 3, and 4 above.)
IV (The statement of the proposition and definition of terms. Paragraphs 9–10.) What is the plan?
  1. (Make whatever points you wish, stating characteristics of the plan.)
V (Common ground of agreement.) "The idea of conciliation" has been admitted by both North and the House.
  1, 2. (Answer questions 1 and 2.)
VI (Point of difference.) Burke accepts the *principle* of conciliation admitted by his opponent, but differs as to the means of execution. "The proposal ought to originate from us."
  1, 2. (What reasons does Burke give?)
VII (Statement of the issues.) There are two capital leading questions to decide:
  1, 2.

VIII (Transition from *Introduction* to *Body.*) Our decision on these two great questions must be made in light of what the nature and circumstances of America demand, and by no means according to abstract ideas and theories of government.

The object in making such an outline is to help you in laying hold of the order and arrangement of Burke's ideas, and to show you the relationship of those ideas to Burke's point of view and the great purpose in his speech. Working it out gives one some appreciation of the orderliness of Burke's mind. It should always be remembered that any outline is but a means to an end, and not an end in itself. Mere mechanical memorization of an outline is a waste of time, and for this reason no ready-made outline is given.

Mere mastery of the content is not the whole end in reading Burke. One ought not to read far into the *Speech* without having formed some opinion of its author. What manner of man would think as he does? What characteristics do his words betray? What do you see in him to admire? Was he industrious? generous? just? practical? Did he understand men? What evidence of an understanding of human nature does he show? Did he see clearly? Was he farsighted? You need read no more than the first fourteen paragraphs to be able to form some opinion on these questions, and no small amount of the pleasure which you can derive from reading the rest of the *Speech* will come from watching Burke's personality unfold itself as he goes on.

No appreciation of Burke is quite complete that does not pay some attention to his style. Just as there is a pleasure in watching a gifted artist draw a face with a few strokes of his pencil, so there is a pleasure in watching Burke's mind work, so to speak—in seeing how with a few words he can sum up a whole situation and drive his point home in a vigorous, vivid, and unmistakably clear manner. Burke's style shows two outstanding characteristics: (1) an ability to state plain facts *in plain language with vigor and clarity,* and (2) an ability to make those facts *vivid and striking* by a statement *which appeals to the imagination.* Take for example Paragraph 43. Here he is making the point that America is so far removed from England that Parliament cannot expect the same obedience there which it gets in England. Note how he states this point, and develops it.

"The last cause of this disobedient spirit in the colonies is hardly less powerful than the rest, as it is not merely moral, but laid deep in the natural constitution of things. Three thousand miles of ocean lie between you and them. No contrivance can prevent the effect of this distance in weakening government. [Up to this point you have simply plain statement of fact. Now, note how the same point is made by appeal to imagination.] *Seas roll,* and months pass, between the order and the execution; and the want of speedy explanation is enough to defeat a whole system. *You have, indeed, winged ministers of vengeance, who carry your bolts in their pounces to the remotest verge of the sea. But there a power steps in, that limits the arrogance of raging passions and furious elements, and says So far shalt thou go and no farther. Who are you that you should fret and rage and bite the chains of Nature?* Nothing worse happens to you than does to all nations who have extensive Empire; and it happens in all the forms into which Empire can be thrown. *In large bodies, the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it.* The Turk cannot govern Egypt and Arabia and Kurdistan as he governs Thrace; nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers which he has at Brusa and Smyrna. *Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster.* The sultan gets such obedience as he can. *He governs with a loose rein,* that he may govern at all; and the whole of the force and vigor of his authority in his center is derived from a prudent relaxation in all his borders. Spain, in her provinces, is perhaps not so well obeyed as you are in yours. She complies too; she submits; she watches times. This is the immutable condition, the eternal law, of extensive and detached empire."

In this paragraph the *imaginative* statements are underlined. Read the paragraph without them. The meaning is there in plain statements of fact. Do the imaginative statements add to the paragraph? Note that they are imaginative because they are not *literal* but *figurative.*

This paragraph also illustrates another characteristic of Burke. Note the use of the *balanced* sentence beginning "She complies . . ." Burke often uses this kind of sentence to sum up a situation. Is it forceful and vigorous? Note also the concluding sentence. Does it give an impression of *finality?* of gathering up all that has gone before? Notice as you read, Burke's effective concluding sentences. He never leaves a paragraph "hanging in air." He brings it to an emphatic and well-rounded end.

The paragraph also illustrates another secret of Burke's vividness. He does not confine himself to general statements. He often follows general statements with specific instances which make his point vivid. Note the general statement: "In large bodies . . ." This is followed immediately by specific instance: "The Turk cannot . . ."

An occasional examination of a striking paragraph or sentence for the purpose of trying to discover the secret of its effectiveness will result in a better appreciation of Burke and in some understanding of why it is the *Speech* has lived in literature, for the test of literature is not, after all, what the author says but how he says it. Burke, for example, may be commonplace in some of his sentiments, but he is never commonplace in the way he expresses them.

UNIT II (PARAGRAPHS 15–30)

In Paragraph 14 Burke has stated the two capital questions, or issues. He now begins the argument on the first of these, *Whether you* [England] *ought to concede?* In Paragraphs 15–64 he develops five arguments in support of conciliation by concession. The first of these is found in Paragraphs 15–30. It is stated in Paragraph 14—viz., the nature and circumstances of America demand conciliation. Paragraphs 15–30 illustrate what is called *Direct Proof*.

15–16. The first and most important consideration is the population. Burke's practical mind saw clearly enough that, whether the colonists were right or wrong, there were too many of them to trifle with. One suspects that many of his hearers were inclined to underrate the importance of this population in event of war.

17–28. In these paragraphs Burke describes the great commerce of the colonies. He does not go into details, since the matter had been but recently discussed in the House. He tries to present the matter vividly by showing that between 1704 and 1772, during the life of a single man, Lord Bathhurst, the export trade of the colonies has come to equal what that of England and the colonies combined totaled in 1704. His point is that to destroy this commerce by restrictive legislation will in the end deal a great blow to the prosperity of the mother country. Note the concluding sentence in Paragraph 27. Is it an effective sentence?

29. Burke next calls attention to the agriculture of the colonies and its importance to England. What is the significance of the statement: "For some time past the Old World has been fed from the New"?

30. Burke here enlarges upon the value of the colonial fishing enterprise to England. He emphasizes the value not so much of the fisheries as the value of the spirit by which that enterprising employment has been exercised. This he implies is a thing the Empire should encourage. Read carefully that part of the paragraph beginning: "Whilst we follow them" and ending "bone of manhood." Is it an effective statement of the facts? Is it imaginative? What is the secret of its appeal? Can you tell? The sentence beginning "When I contemplate these things" forms a conclusion to this first argument. Does history support Burke's opinion that the prosperity of the colonies was a result of the freedom from interference which they had enjoyed previous to 1760?

If you wish to make an outline, fill in the following:

Body (15–

A (First capital question or issue.) England should concede: for
  I (First of the five main arguments.) The nature and circumstances of America demand that England make concessions; for
    1. (What about the population?)
    2. (The commerce? What sub-points are developed here?)
    3. (The agriculture?)
    4. (The fisheries?)

In order to fill 1, 2, 3, and 4, look for statements in Burke's own words which may be used.

What evidences of Burke's practical way of looking at a problem do you find in Paragraphs 15–30? What evidence of his industry?

UNIT III (PARAGRAPHS 31–36)

These paragraphs illustrate *refutation* in argument. They furnish a good illustration of an outstanding characteristic of Burke's style—his compactness. Note his ability to say a great deal in little space. An excellent example is the sentence: "Terror is not always the effect of force; and an armament is not a victory." What does this mean? Can you illustrate the truth of it from the World War? Can you say the same thing in fewer words? Try it. Keep an eye open as you continue the *Speech* for terse, vigorous, compact statements.

31. Burke chooses an opportune time to refute the argument that America should be pacified by force of arms. He has just finished showing how important in a material sense America is. It is a consideration which no doubt convinced his opponents that America was "well worth fighting for."

32. How does the statement, "a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered," illustrate Burke's style? Is the statement true?

33. What is the meaning of the closing sentence? Can you illustrate it?

34. What possibility mentioned in this paragraph actually came about? What does Burke mean by the "American spirit"? What characteristics or qualities make up the American spirit? How has this spirit "made the country"?

35. What reason does Burke give for the growth of the colonies? On this point you should read Webster's *Bunker Hill Oration* which you will find in this volume.

36. This is a good example of a summarizing and a transition paragraph. It consists of two sentences, the first summarizing the reasons against force, and the second stating the next point. Burke's transitional expressions are worth study.

The outline here is very simple.

II (Second main argument to support Question I.) The argument that force should be used since America is worth fighting for is untenable; for
1, 2, 3, 4. (These can be stated in Burke's own words.)

What is your opinion of Burke's arguments against force? Are they good ones? Can you illustrate his points from history? Do you think Burke could see clearly? Why?

UNIT IV (PARAGRAPHS 37–44)

In these paragraphs Burke develops his third argument in support of conciliation.

37. The love of freedom which is the outstanding feature of the temper and character of the American people makes conciliation necessary. It is this fierce spirit of liberty which makes the Americans unruly whenever they feel that their freedom is endangered. Burke gives *six* reasons or explanations for this spirit.

38. The people of the colonies are descendants of Englishmen, who have always adored freedom. Burke points out that America was largely settled by men who left England to find liberty in days when freedom in England was endangered by the Stuart kings. One of the reasons why the Puritans in England ultimately took up arms against the king was the attempt on the part of the latter to tax the people without consent of Parliament. The point which Burke emphasizes in this paragraph is this: Whenever Englishmen have had control of taxation they have felt that they had liberty, and whenever that control has been endangered, they have felt that their liberty was endangered. The colonists, he says, are just like all other Englishmen in this respect. Burke's statement that "Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found. Liberty inheres in some sensible object," is worth trying to understand. It is not difficult to see through. It means that there is no such thing as abstract liberty. Liberty always means liberty *to do certain specific*

things—it "inheres in some sensible object." Therefore, liberty may mean different things to different people. Among the English it has always meant liberty in matters of taxation. He implies that Englishmen will put up with a great deal of despotism in other respects, but on this one point they will not yield. In this matter of taxation he says that Englishmen have always "felt the pulse" of liberty. The colonists have this English idea of liberty. Here again, Burke's practical nature comes out. It makes no difference whether the colonists are right or wrong in feeling as they do, the FACT is they feel that way, and no plan for dealing with the colonies will work if it ignores this FACT.

39. Here Burke points out that the colonists have been accustomed to self-government and that they love liberty for that reason.

40. Here Burke points out that the majority of the colonists left Europe to find religious liberty, and that on religious grounds they are much attached to the idea of liberty.

41. Here he develops the point that in the South the presence of slaves makes free men all the more jealous of their own liberty. Again his practical nature comes out. He says in effect, "It may not be a worthy sentiment on the part of the people of the South, but it is a fact." "I cannot alter the nature of man," are his words. It is human nature for slave-holders to feel as they do; it has always been so in slave-holding communities.

42. Here he calls attention to the fact that the American colonists are well grounded in English law which has always protected liberty. Note his closing sentence. Is it effective? Is it strong? Burke's concluding sentences are invariably vigorous, and drive his point home.

43. Here again is evidence of Burke's practical understanding. He saw clearly that England could not govern at a great distance with the efficiency which she could at home. Note the sentence: "Seas roll and months pass . . . system." Is this a strong sentence? What makes it so? Note the closing sentence.

44. An example of a good summarizing paragraph.

The outline of Paragraphs 37–44 is probably already clear to you from your reading.

III (Third main argument in support of Question I.) The temper and character of the Americans makes conciliation necessary; for
  1. The spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies than in any other people on earth; for
    a, b, c, d, e, f. (What six things tend to make the Americans love liberty?)

What evidences of Burke's practical statesmanship do these paragraphs give? Find five statements or sentences which illustrate an outstanding characteristic of Burke's style. Find three strong closing sentences, three transitional expressions, two good summarizing statements.

UNIT V (PARAGRAPHS 45–46)

Here Burke shows that coercion is an imprudent experiment.

45. At the beginning of this paragraph he is still commenting on the spirit of liberty among the colonists. Note the effect of the three sentences commencing, "Perhaps . . ." Are these statements ironical? Do they emphasize the characteristics of this spirit better than a direct statement would? Note Burke's method of directing attention to the real question at issue in the sentence, "The question . . . with it?" What characteristic of Burke's thinking does this sentence reveal? In the second half of the paragraph Burke shows how the policy of coercion has failed in Virginia. When the royal governor dissolved the Assembly, it promptly met independently; and its laws were more respected than those of the legal government. What characteristic of Burke's style is seen in the sentence, "Obedience is what makes a government, and not the names by which it is called"? What does the sentence mean?

46. In this paragraph Burke points to the outcome of the experiment with coercion in Massachusetts. There the colonists were able to get along without the legal government. In conclusion he asserts that the arguments used to prove that Americans ought not to be free may be used against freedom in England. This is one of the reasons why the Whigs in general championed the cause of the colonies. They felt that if George III succeeded in his colonial policy, he would next use more vigorous measures to establish "personal government" at home.

Burke's point here is:

IV (Fourth main argument in support of Question I.) Coercion is a dangerous experiment; for
  1. It leads to the weakening of those established opinions and fundamental principles which contribute so much to public tranquillity; for
    a. In Virginia, the people have discovered that they can get along with an irregular government of their own.
    b. In Massachusetts, the colonists can get along with no government.
    c. In England, the arguments used to prove that Americans have no right to their liberties may be used to prove that Englishmen ought not to be free.

Burke's concern that the developments in Virginia and Massachusetts might lead to a disregard for orderly government is no doubt genuine, for Burke was a conservative, and a stanch advocate of orderly and established government. Much of his objection to Parliament's colonial policy arose from the fact that he saw in it a violation of the regular and customary English procedures in government. (See his objection to North's plan in Paragraph 123.) In Paragraph 46 Burke gives expression to his desire for a policy which will "give a little stability to our politics." To his mind it was sufficient proof of the evil of the Parliamentary policy that it kept America in a turmoil, and that it upset orderly government.

UNIT VI (PARAGRAPHS 47–64)

In these paragraphs Burke presents his fifth and last argument in favor of conciliation.

47. He opens in Paragraph 47 by enumerating three possible ways of dealing with "this stubborn spirit" which prevails in the colonies. In debate, whoever proposes a plan is under the obligation of proving that (1) his plan will accomplish the desired purpose, and (2) that no other plan will work so well. Burke proceeds by a process of elimination to prepare the way for his own plan. He shows that the first two of the three possible plans here enumerated are all impracticable. He mentions a fourth—that of giving up the colonies—but pays no attention to it, since it is not one which has any support in Parliament.

48. Burke takes up first the plan "to change the spirit, by removing the causes." Review Paragraphs 37–44, in which the *six* causes for this spirit of liberty are given.

49–50. To the proposal which had been voiced in the House that no more grants of land be made in America, Burke finds two leading objections: (1) there is already much unsettled land, and (2) the people would occupy without grants. In Paragraph 50 he gives evidence of having understood pretty well the restlessness of the frontier population. Here again, in Paragraph 50, we catch a glimpse of that attachment to orderly government and "fixed establishments" noted above. Any policy which will uproot humanity seems to him an evil one.

51. To what do the words "this policy" refer?

52. Burke was somewhat ahead of his time, perhaps, in his economic ideas with respect to foreign trade. The theory at the bottom of the regulation of colonial trade, as exemplified by all European nations in his day, was that colonies were to be kept as markets for the manufac-

tured articles of the parent country. Consequently all regulations looked upon colonies as potential rivals, and prohibited colonies from buying from any other nation and in many cases from developing manufactures of their own. It was thought that a favorable balance might be permanently secured to the parent state if the colonies exported raw materials and bought them back in manufactured articles. It seems to have taken some time to discover that after a time, the colonies would have nothing with which to buy. Note the closing sentence of this paragraph. What does it mean?

53. Here Burke begins consideration of the second plan stated in Paragraph 47. Do you call this a strong paragraph? Is it typical of Burke's style? Illustrate your answer.

54. What does Burke mean by saying, "You cannot persuade them to burn their books of curious science"?

55. What is the meaning of the sentence, "It is sometimes as hard to persuade slaves to be free as it is to compel freemen to be slaves"? To what does Burke refer in the words "this auspicious scheme"? Is he serious? To what does "both these pleasing tasks" refer?

56. How does Burke ridicule the proposal to emancipate the slaves of the South?

57. How does Burke make his point vivid?

58. What two things does this paragraph do?

59. Burke now takes up the third possible plan stated in Paragraph 47, that of prosecuting the colonists as criminals. He points out that there is a difference between a criminal proceeding against an individual or even a group of individuals and one against a whole people. What sentence in the paragraph best states his point? Note the concluding sentence. Is it a strong one?

60. In this paragraph Burke defines an "empire," and points out that in an empire the communities which make it up have privileges and immunities. His point is that it is not treason if these communities stand up for their privileges, and that it does not follow that they deny the whole authority of the head of the empire when they resist encroachment on their privileges and rights. Do you understand his point? Can you illustrate it?

61. Here Burke points out that in the dispute with America, England is judge in her own case. See the footnotes to this paragraph. Note the closing sentence.

62–63. In these paragraphs Burke turns his attention to the attempts already made to proceed against the spirit as criminal. He says that in Massachusetts, although rebellion has been declared, it has not been proceeded against as such. The policy of the government in Massachusetts has more the appearances of war against an independent power. He points out that no steps have been taken toward the arrest and conviction of any individual. It will be remembered that the troops on which the farmers fired at Concord and Lexington were on their way to seize Samuel Adams and John Hancock. Burke's point seems well taken, for even though the English governor did finally proceed against these two individuals, he sent soldiers rather than the civil authorities to arrest them. In Paragraph 63 Burke shows that menaces of criminal action have made matters worse rather than better, and concludes that such a plan is not right. Note the concluding sentence.

64. Another good example of a summarizing and transition paragraph. Burke here introduces the third plan stated in Paragraph 47.

In these paragraphs Burke is stating his fifth argument in favor of conciliation.

V (Fifth main argument in support of Question I.) There are but three ways of proceeding relative to this stubborn spirit which prevails in the colonies: (1) to change that spirit by removing the causes, (2) to prosecute it as criminal, (3) to comply with it as necessary. No way is open but the third and last; for

1. The first of these plans is attended with great difficulties; for

a. To change the nature of the object (see Paragraph 15) is inexpedient; for

(1) It is not possible to check the growing population by making no further grants of land; for

(a), (b). (What two objections are given in Paragraph 49–50?)

(2) To impoverish the colonies (that is, by restrictions on trade, to prevent them from exporting their agricultural surplus, discourage their sea-borne commerce and their manufactures, and cut them off from the fisheries) is a foolish policy; for

(a) It would make them unserviceable to us. (Destroy our own market, for an impoverished people cannot buy anything.)

(b) Their discontent may cause them to turn on us when we need their loyal support.

b. The temper and character which prevail in the colonies cannot be altered; for

(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6). (These points should give no trouble.)

2. The second plan, to prosecute the spirit in its overt acts as criminal, is impracticable; for
   a. (What sentence states the point of Paragraph 59?)
   b. (What is the point in Paragraph 60?)
   c. (What is the point in Paragraph 61?)
   d. (In Paragraph 62?)

This completes Burke's argument on the first of the "two capital leading questions" stated in Paragraph 14. This is a good point to stop for review. Can you state the *five* main arguments in favor of conciliation? Can you state the reasoning in each case? If so, you know all there is to the outline of the *Speech*. What opinion have you formed of Burke? Did he know his subject? Is he guided by facts or by theories? Can he distinguish between what is relevant and what is irrelevant? Does he have an orderly mind? What do you find in him to admire? Can he make himself clear? What characteristics of his style do you regard important or valuable to a speaker or writer? Do you find him interesting? Do you think you could present the case as well as he did?

Unit VII (Paragraphs 65–87)

With Paragraph 65 Burke begins the argument on the second of the two "capital leading questions" stated in Paragraph 14, that is, *What the concession ought to be?* His answer to this question is the *third plan* which Paragraphs 1–64 have led up to—"to comply with the American spirit as necessary."

65. In this paragraph he restates this plan in other and more definite terms. He says here that his intent is to satisfy the complaint of the colonies that "they are taxed in a Parliament in which they are not represented." Here will be recognized the battle-cry of the Revolution: "No taxation without representation." The first point which he makes is quite characteristic of the direct and practical nature of his thinking. It is: To satisfy a people, you must give them what they ask. Note how he disposes of Parliament's theories and fine-spun arguments in a simple and vigorous manner in the last two sentences of the paragraph. What does he mean by "the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom"? It will be found helpful in connection with the reading of the speech from here on to have posted in the classroom a copy of the Declaration of Independence. Many of the complaints to which Burke refers are recited in the Declaration.

66–67. These paragraphs give a good illustration of Burke's ability to see the issue and to stick to it. He refuses to discuss the question whether or not Parliament has a right to tax the colonies. He brands the question as irrelevant. Find sentences in which he does so. What is the effect of the rhetorical questions in Paragraph 66? Note the two concluding sentences in Paragraph 67. What do they mean? Are they characteristic of Burke? How?

68. Here Burke restates his plan in different terms. What does he mean by admitting the people of the colonies "into an interest in the Constitution"?

69. A transition paragraph, introducing the matter of revenue laws. See footnotes to Paragraph 70.

70. Here is another piece of refutation. Burke takes up the argument often urged in Parliament that once Parliament yielded on taxation, the Americans would next demand repeal of the trade laws.

71–73. Burke points out that in North's opinion the trade laws are useless (Paragraph 70), that no one ever hears of them except in connection with the argument that the colonists will demand their repeal if Parliament yields on the revenue laws (Paragraph 71), and that the whole matter boils down to the absurd argument that the revenue laws, which are mischievous (that is, causing trouble), must be kept in order to preserve the trade laws, which are useless (Paragraph 73). Paragraph 70 illustrates how an opponent's argument may be turned against him. Burke's reasoning here is a good example of *reducing an argument to an absurdity*. Note how the point is restated and re-emphasized in the concluding sentence of Paragraph 72.

74. Burke here points out that the quarrel is over taxation, and not over the trade laws. Note the three concluding sentences.

75. Note the use of rhetorical questions to produce ridicule and emphasize the unsoundness of the merely theoretical arguments that the colonies will go further.

76. Note how Burke effects a summary and a transition in one sentence.

77–78. As we might expect, Burke offers no mere theory of his own. He is particular to point out that his plan is in agreement with established practice and in accord with the spirit of the English Constitution. He has found four precedents.

79–86. In these paragraphs Burke presents his four precedents. They are worth study to observe how he keeps restating his point—that conciliation by admitting the colonies into an interest in the Constitution is in accord with English tradition. Note the following sentences: "But your ancestors did not churlishly sit down alone to the feast of Magna

Charta"; "It was not English arms, but the English Constitution, that conquered Ireland." Can you find sentences of similar import in Paragraph 86? Note the rhetorical questions in Paragraph 85. What is their purpose?

87. In *argument by analogy* it is always necessary to prove that the circumstances in each case are alike. Burke has been arguing that his plan succeeded in four cases in conciliating a turbulent people. He must show that the conditions in America are like those in Ireland, Wales, etc. This is the purpose of Paragraph 87. Note his method. He asks questions such as his opponents might ask, and answers them. Can you give any cases since Burke's day in which his plan has been used? In the foregoing paragraphs Burke has been presenting his arguments in favor of his plan that Parliament should satisfy the complaint of the colonists by admitting them to a share in the English Constitution. He has presented *six* arguments. Logically, his main contention is a development from the fifth argument on the question: Whether or not England ought to concede. It is the third plan stated in Paragraph 47. You will probably find it less confusing if you begin your outline anew, as follows.

B (Second capital leading question. Paragraph 14.) Parliament should satisfy the complaint of the colonies that they are taxed by a Parliament in which they have no representation by admitting them into an interest in the Constitution; for
  I To please a people you must give them what they ask.
  II The argument that Parliament has a legal right to tax the colonies is irrelevant; for
    1, 2. (What two points are made in Paragraphs 66 and 67?)
  III The argument that if the revenue laws are repealed the colonists will next demand the repeal of the trade laws is unsound; for
    1. (What is the point of Paragraphs 71–73?)
    2. (What is the point of Paragraph 74?)
  IV The argument that the colonies will go further in their demands is unsound; for
    1, 2. (What points are made in Paragraphs 75 and 76?)
  V Concession by admitting the colonies into an interest in the English Constitution is in accord with the very spirit of the Constitution itself; for
    1. It has satisfied the complaint in four cases; for
      a, b, c, d. (These cases can be stated in Burke's own words. Find sentences from the text which may be used.)

VI These cases are "on all fours" with that of America: for
  1. The conditions in all five cases are practically the same; for
    a, b, c, etc. (Note the similarities which Burke points out.)

Burke has given *six* arguments in support of his plan. He has yet *two* more to offer. What in general is your opinion of Burke's reasoning in these paragraphs? Is it sound? Has British imperial policy with respect to Canada, Australia, South Africa and Ireland followed Burke's plan or not? What evidence do you find of his distaste for theories of government? Of his ability to see the point and stick to it? Of his ability to express himself clearly and vigorously?

Unit VIII (Paragraphs 88–121)

In Paragraphs 65–87 Burke has stated his plan—that of admitting the colonies into an interest in the Constitution. He now tells *how* he is going to do this. He gives the outstanding features of the plan only. These are presented in *Resolutions*, each accompanied by argument. He does not go into minute detail. To work out the details of the plan would be, he points out, rather the business of executive government. This section of Burke's *Speech* often gives trouble to high school students. Their difficulty arises from their lack of knowledge of Parliamentary procedure and from inability to understand the content of the resolutions and their place in the *Speech*. These difficulties are more apparent than real. Do the following things:

1. Answer the question: What was Burke's immediate problem in speaking? See the statement of this problem at the conclusion of the Comment on Paragraphs 1–14. In brief, he wanted Parliament to adopt a new policy.

2. Read the resolutions carefully to see in plain language just what each states. Note that each is what Burke calls a "resolution of fact." Each states a fact which Burke wants Parliament to acknowledge.

3. Answer the question: Could Parliament consistently continue to support North's policy if it passed Burke's resolutions and thus admitted his facts to be correct?

88. In this paragraph Burke says that his plan does not mean that he intends to invite the colonies to send representatives to the imperial Parliament. The distance is too great to make this scheme practicable.

89. Here he says that he is not going to propose some untried, theoretical, imaginary plan. His idea is to recognize the "mode," that is,

the method of taxation employed with success in the colonies before 1763. This mode in brief was this: The colonial legislatures levied their own taxes and each colony voluntarily gave what it thought just and proper for the common defense and toward the support of the civil government. Burke emphasizes the idea that when one frames a plan of government, he should find out first of all what plan *has actually worked,* and then he should govern himself accordingly. Does this sound like common sense?

90. Here Burke summarizes in brief his six fundamental resolutions. See the footnotes to this paragraph.

91. Burke says that after he has offered his six fundamental resolutions of fact, he will offer three more. These three are stated in Paragraphs 108, 113, and 114. They provide (1) for the repeal of five laws against which the colonists had complained, (2) for assuring to the colonists an independent judiciary, and (3) for making the courts of admiralty more commodious. Note that Burke points out to Parliament that if it admits his facts, it must to be consistent, vote the remedies in the three "corollary" resolutions.

92. Here he states his first resolution. In brief it is this: That the colonies have not been represented in Parliament by representatives of their own choosing.

93–94. Here is the second resolution: That Parliament has taxed the colonies "without representation" and that this taxation has been injurious to the colonies. What does Burke gain by using the language preamble to the Chester Act? See Paragraphs 84 and 85.

95. Here Burke presents his arguments in support of the fact incorporated in the second resolution. He attacks the argument that the Americans have not been "touched and grieved" with taxes, pointing out that their grievance had two aspects: (1) their liberties have been infringed, and (2) they have actually been grieved by the taxes as taxes, for Parliament itself repealed or reduced some revenue laws.

96. The third resolution of fact states that: There is no experience in favor of sending colonial representatives to Parliament.

97–98. The fourth resolution states the fact that: Each colony has a legislature with legal authority to levy taxes for all public purposes, civil and military. To understand the significance of this resolution, it is necessary to get the point of the argument used against it. This was that the imperial Parliament alone had power to *grant*, or vote, money to the crown, that is, for the maintenance of the government. This was a right which as far as England itself was concerned had been dearly bought. It was a great safeguard to liberty in England, for it meant that no king could raise money to support an oppressive army or government. In the case of the colonies, however, Parliament was applying the principle to circumstances much different from those the principle was originally designed to meet. Parliament now insisted that it alone could legally grant taxes, that is, authorize the levying of taxes, in the colonies for the maintenance of government, and denied the legal competence of colonial assemblies to make grants to the crown. Burke now in support of his resolution shows that this competence is certain, it is a right recognized for over a century during which the colonies have in fact made grants to his Majesty, and no one has objected.

99–104. The fifth resolution of fact is: That colonial assemblies have often made grants to the crown and that these grants have been acknowledged by Parliament itself. In Paragraphs 99–104 Burke presents instances to prove his point. He shows that (1) the colonies gave to satiety, and that (2) Parliament by its *encouragement* admitted the legality of the grants.

105. Here Burke shows the *revenue by grant* has been productive of money whereas *revenue by imposition* has produced nothing but discontent.

106–107. The sixth and last "fundamental" resolution of fact is: That taxation by colonial assemblies has been more productive and more agreeable than Parliamentary taxation. This completes what Burke calls the "fundamental" part of his plan. It is "fundamental" because as he points out in Paragraph 108 "everything which has been made to enforce a contrary system" must fail if Parliament passes these *six* resolutions. Do you understand this point? Note how in Paragraph 107 he restates the question in different terms and makes a transition to some of the things which make up the "contrary system."

108–112. Burke has now finished presenting his plan, and he now goes somewhat beyond his plan. He makes a start at putting his plan into effect, for he offers resolutions for the repeal of *five* laws which were obnoxious to the colonists. These laws are referred to by name in the footnotes. He points out that the Boston Port Bill is discriminatory, that the act abrogating the charter of Massachusetts tends to the subversion of justice, that the act for bringing accused persons to England for trial is but temporary and that the act for the trial of treasons has been turned from its original purpose.

113. Burke here offers a remedy for another grievance of the colonists —the attempt of the king to appoint judges during the king's pleasure only. Judges thus appointed might be removed at will if they insisted

on justice for colonists accused under unconstitutional laws. See the Declaration of Independence.

114–115. This resolution had for its purpose removing another complaint of the colonies. See the footnotes to this paragraph.

116. What does this paragraph do?

117–119. Here Burke takes up another counter-argument for refutation. It is the argument often advanced in the Commons that the doctrine of the Chester Act might logically be extended to all legislation, in other words, that if the colonists were given the right to levy their own taxes, they might insist that they should be permitted to make all their own laws. Burke's first retort is that the words of his resolution (the second resolution of fact, Paragraph 93) are the words of Parliament and that they carry no presumption not as favorable to the rights of Parliament as to the colonies. He points out further that the clear intent of this doctrine was to limit it to taxation. In Paragraph 119 he points out that the colonies have not "in any cool hour" gone beyond the demand of immunity in relation to taxes. There are in this paragraph some very common-sense observations on human nature and on the political nature of the English-speaking people in particular. Burke may be seen here at his best. In the sentence beginning "It is besides, a very great mistake . . . ," he calls attention to the fact that in matters of government men never go as far in practice as they do in contention or argument. Can you illustrate this from American or English political life? Does it ever happen that a party or a candidate urges extreme reforms or changes, but never goes the full length of practice? Can you give examples? Read Paragraph 119 carefully. There is nowhere a better explanation of the practical political mind of the English-speaking peoples. Note especially the sentence: "Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interest, and not on metaphysical speculations." This is a formidable sentence, but it sums up in a splendid manner what Burke says, and it is worth understanding. Can you illustrate the statement from every-day life or from your own experience?

120. Burke's point here is stated in the first sentence. Has the subsequent history of the British Empire justified Burke? What evidence can you find in the attitude of Canada, Australia, and other dominions in the World War?

121. The point here is that giving this power of taxation to the colonies will not dissolve the unity of the empire.

In the foregoing paragraphs Burke has been presenting his *seventh* argument in favor of his plan. His main point stated in Paragraphs 88–89 is:

VII Although it is impracticable, because of the great intervening distance, to give the colonies representatives in Parliament, there is a recognized, established, constitutional method of representation which will satisfy their complaints; for

  1. Giving the colonies the right to levy their own taxes in their colonial assemblies will give satisfaction; for

[*Here Burke read the first two resolutions constituting the plan*]

    a. The argument that the colonists have not been "touched and grieved" by taxes is unsound; for

      (1), (2). (What two points are made in Paragraph 95?)

    [*Here Burke read the third and fourth resolutions*]

    b. The competence in the colonial assemblies to make grants to the Crown is certain; for

      (1) (What point is made in Paragraph 98?)

        [*Here Burke read the fifth resolution*]

      (2) These grants have been treated as legal by Parliament itself. (Paragraph 104.) For

        (a) Parliament has not only acknowledged that the colonies gave, but gave to satiety.

        (b) Parliament has rewarded and encouraged the colonies.

      (3) Mr. Grenville, himself, has recognized the right in the colonies to grant taxes. (Paragraph 104.)

    c. Taxation by imposition has produced nothing but discontent.

        [*Here Burke read his sixth resolution*]

    d. If these six fundamental propositions embodying this plan are accepted by Parliament, everything which has caused dissatisfaction must fall; for

  [*Here Burke read the first of the three corollary resolutions*]

      (1) The Boston Port Bill must be repealed; for

        (a) It is discriminatory [and hence a cause of dissatisfaction]

      (2), (3), (4) (What other laws must be repealed or modified? See Paragraphs 108–112.)

      (5) The system of appointment of judges during good behavior must be restored; for

        (a) The colonists are dissatisfied with the present system of appointment for the king's pleasure.

  [*Here Burke read the second of the corollary resolutions*]

(6) The courts of admiralty must be made more commodious and provision made for more decent maintenance of judges; for
    (a) The colonists complain of the present courts.

[*Here Burke read the third of the corollary resolutions*]

2. The argument that the colonies will extend the doctrine of the Chester Act to all legislation is unsound; for
   a. (See Paragraph 118.)
   b. (What point is made in Paragraph 119?)
   c. (What point is made in Paragraph 120?)
3. The argument that giving the colonies this power of granting taxes will dissolve the unity of the empire is unsound; for
   a. It has not done so in the case of Ireland.

UNIT IX (PARAGRAPHS 122–131)

In these paragraphs Burke offers one more argument (4. under VII in the outline) in support of the contention that his plan will give satisfaction to the colonists. He compares North's plan with his, and shows *seven* particulars in which his own is superior as a conciliatory measure.

123. Burke's point here is that North's plan is a mere project—that is, it is an invention of North's and nothing else. It is sufficient, in Burke's mind, to condemn it that it is an "unheard of" thing, without any experience or Constitutional precedent in its favor. It is a mere experiment.

124. It is an experiment which must be fatal to the Constitution, for it means that the contributions asked from each colony, or quotas, will not even be made up by Parliament. They will be determined by the Cabinet, and it is unconstitutional and not in accord with the English practice to permit the Cabinet to lay taxes. Burke emphasizes the point by dwelling upon the impossibility and impracticability of settling the quotas in open Parliament.

125. The point here is clear. What does he mean by saying: "You give them the very grievance for the remedy"? Is this an effective sentence?

126. Burke's point here is that if the colonies dispute their quotas, the whole plan will be thrown into confusion, and that equalizing the assessments will be an almost impossible task.

127. Here he points out that if all the colonies do not pay their quotas without dispute, there is no way to force the refractory colonies

to pay without endangering the prosperity of the obedient colonies and that of England herself. Examine carefully his illustrations, and the point will be clear. Such a paragraph as this shows how well Burke understood economic conditions in America.

128. Burke points out here that in order to induce the colonies to accept North's plan the quotas must be made so small that they will yield only a petty revenue; otherwise there will be a new quarrel every time new quotas are fixed.

129. Here the point is that if the colonies neglect to pay their quotas, the situation will be just what it is at present; and no advantage will have been gained.

130. North's plan will produce no revenue; it will produce only a perpetual quarrel over quotas. His plan is no more than a scheme to break the union of the colonies. See the footnotes to Paragraph 9.

131. This is a famous paragraph. Note Burke's effective use of the balanced sentence to contrast the two plans.

Paragraphs 123–131 contain some of Burke's most effective argument. Here he is swift and vigorous. He hits blow after blow, and he hits hard. He demolishes North's plan. Note how he keeps hammering on the point that North's plan will not work and that it is a plan for "ransom by auction." It will not work because it ignores all the nature and circumstances, and the temper and character of the Americans, and because it is not in accord with the traditional English way of doing things.

(Paragraphs 132–135)

In these paragraphs Burke refutes an argument urged against the plan stated in VII of the outline. It is that his plan will produce no revenue. Burke's reply is that the plan gives the colonists the power of REFUSAL, which he calls the "first of all revenues." His meaning is that the colonists will give more and that they will give to satiety if necessary if they are free to give or not, as they wish. Experience proves it. And he points out further reasons to support the point in the sentence in Paragraph 132 beginning: "For first observe . . ."

133. Here the point is that rival parties in the colonies will compete with each other in making grants to the Crown.

134. Here Burke protests against accepting a fixed quota when he is certain that if the colonies were free to grant, gratitude will result in a larger revenue.

135. The point here is that no plan of taxation by imposition will produce a revenue anyway from a country so remote as America; and Burke cites the case of Bengal in support of his point.

The points developed in Paragraphs 122–135 are as follows:

VII (See Paragraphs 88–89.)
- 4. Lord North's plan will not give satisfaction to the colonies; for
  - a. It is a mere project. (Paragraph 123.)
  - b. (See Paragraph 124); for
    - (1), (2) (What two reasons are given in Paragraph 124?)
  - c. (See Paragraph 125); for
    - (1) (What does Burke say in the third sentence?)
  - d. (See Paragraph 126); for
    - (1) (What point does Burke make relative to settling the propositions?)
    - (2) (What point does he make relative to obedient and refractory colonies? Paragraph 127.)
  - e. (See Paragraph 128.)
  - f. (What is the point of Paragraph 129?)
  - g. It is at bottom a scheme of disunion. (Paragraph 130.)
- 5. The argument that Burke's plan will give England no revenue is unsound; for
  - a. (What is the point of Paragraph 132?)
  - b. (In Paragraph 133?)
  - c. (In Paragraph 135?)

UNIT X (PARAGRAPHS 136–139)

These paragraphs constitute the *conclusion*. They are worth careful reading. Here Burke states his *eighth* argument in support of the second "capital leading question"—that the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges and equal protection will bind the colonies to England if they are given the liberties of Englishmen. Paragraph 135 is an excellent example of Burke's style. Find three sentences typical of Burke's style.

137. Note the point begun in Paragraph 136 and continued in this that it is not laws and regulations which holds the English people together, but their common attachment to their government. What evidence can you produce on this point? Is it true of the American people today?

138. Here Burke turns his scorn on what he calls "those vulgar and

mechanical politicians" who believe that it is the authority of Parliament and the laws which it makes that hold the empire together. It is rather what he calls magnanimity. What do you think of his argument? Can you apply it to some other organization? Note the sentence: "Magnanimity . . . wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together." What is the meaning of the sentence? Is it typical of Burke's style? What makes it an effective sentence? Note the concluding sentences in this paragraph.

139. Here Burke moved the six fundamental resolutions and the three corollary resolutions which he had read in the course of the speech. The first four of the fundamental resolutions and the last of the corollary resolutions did come to vote, the previous question being moved and carried. The rest of the resolutions were defeated. It is of interest to note here that in 1778, Lord North in an attempt to end the war in America and induce the Americans to return to the allegiance of England offered them Burke's plan, but it was then too late.

Paragraphs 136–139 contain the eighth argument in support of the second main issue. See Paragraph 65.

VIII The close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges and equal protection will bind the colonies to England; for

1. The empire is held together not by laws but by common attachment to the government.
2. English privileges have made the empire, and they alone will preserve it.

What characteristics of Burke's style are to be noted in Paragraphs 136–139? Is it imaginative? Examine in particular Paragraph 136. Underline imaginative sentences or phrases. What examples of compact, vigorous sentences can you find? What feeling or emotion does Burke display in these paragraphs? Does he himself display an ardent attachment to English liberty? Do you find any satire in these paragraphs? What characteristics of Burke himself are revealed? Do you find any evidence of generosity? greatness of spirit? impatience with theorists? impatience with narrow-minded persons? love of justice? confidence in human nature when treated fairly? understanding of human nature in the mass?

MACBETH

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

SECTION VII

MACBETH

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THE DRAMA

ACT I Scenes 1–7 711–740
ACT II Scenes 1–4 741–757
ACT III Scenes 1–6 758–781
ACT IV Scenes 1–3 782–804
ACT V Scenes 1–8 805–823

THE PLAYERS:

Duncan, *King of Scotland;* Malcolm *and* Donalbain, *his sons;* Macbeth *and* Banquo, *generals of the King's army;* Macduff, Lennox, Ross, Menteith, Angus, *and* Caithness, *noblemen of Scotland;* Fleance, *son to Banquo;* Siward, *Earl of Northumberland, general of the English forces;* Young Siward, *his son;* Seyton, *an officer attending on Macbeth;* Boy, *son to Macduff;* An English Doctor; A Scotch Doctor; A Captain; A Porter; An Old Man; Lady Macbeth; Lady Macduff; Gentlewoman, *attending on Lady Macbeth;* Hecate; Three Witches; Apparitions; Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, *and* Messengers.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE 825
THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE 826
SHAKESPEARE'S LONDON AND SHAKESPEARE'S RELATION TO HIS AGE 830
ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHAKESPEAREAN AND MODERN DRAMA 839
THE BACKGROUND OF *Macbeth* 847
ON THE READING AND STUDY OF *Macbeth* 850
THE PLAY BY ACTS AND SCENES 854
A LIST OF BOOKS FOR REFERENCE AND SUPPLEMENTARY READING . 869

MACBETH

William Shakespeare

ACT I

Scene i

A desert place

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches[1]

1 Witch. When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?[2]

---

[1] Witches—The general run of people in Shakespeare's day believed in the existence of witches. *Macbeth* was probably first staged in 1606. The student should remember that as late as 1692, twenty persons were executed in Salem Village, Massachusetts for "witchcraft." See *The Historical Background of Macbeth.*

[2] In thunder, lightning, or in rain—Reginald Scot, who published in 1584 a book entitled *The Discoverie of Witchcraft,* reported that "In Stormes of Haile, or Snowe, Wind, Tempest, or Lightning, is accounted amongst magicians, a Tyme for Conjuring at an easie rate."

2 Witch. When the hurlyburly's[3] done,
When the battle's[4] lost and won.
3 Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.
1 Witch. Where the place?
2 Witch. Upon the heath.
3 Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.
1 Witch. I come, Graymalkin.[5]
All. Paddock[6] calls:—Anon![7]
Fair is foul, and foul is fair;[8]
Hover[9] through the fog and filthy[10] air.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE 2

A camp near Forres

Alarum within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, *with* Attendants, *meeting a bleeding* CAPTAIN

Duncan. What bloody[1] man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight,[2] of the revolt
The newest state.[3]

---

[3] HURLYBURLY—Tumult. The tumult of the battle.

[4] BATTLE—The battle being fought under the leadership of Macbeth and Banquo against the enemies of Duncan. See Scene 2.

[5] GRAYMALKIN—Gray cat, old cat.

[6] PADDOCK—Toad. It was believed that the "familiar spirits" who controlled witches or gave them their power often accompanied them in the form of cats and toads. Scot says of the witches, "They can keep the Divils and Spirits in the likeness of Todes and Cats." This belief is reflected in the words "I come, Graymalkin" and "Paddock calls." The implication is that the witches are obeying their familiar spirits, in the form of a cat and a toad respectively, who now summon them away.

[7] ANON—Immediately. This is the answer of the witches to the call.

[8] FAIR IS FOUL, AND FOUL IS FAIR—To the witches whatever is foul is fair, and whatever is fair (good) is foul.

[9] HOVER—Probably the meaning is, "Let us be off through the fog and filthy air." What does the word "hover" suggest as to the manner in which the witches made their departure?

[10] FILTHY—Murky, gloomy.

[1] BLOODY—Wounded.

[2] AS SEEMETH BY HIS PLIGHT—To judge from his condition.

[3] NEWEST STATE—Latest news.

Malcolm. This is the sergeant
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
'Gainst my captivity.[4] Hail, brave friend!
Say to the king thy knowledge of the broil[5]
As thou didst leave it.
Captain. Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art.[6] The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy[7] to be a rebel, for to that[8]
The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him[9]—from the western isles[10]
Of kerns and gallowglasses[11] is supplied;
And fortune, on his damned[12] quarry[13] smiling,
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak;
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
Which smok'd with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion[14] carv'd out his passage
Till he fac'd the slave;
Which[15] ne'er shook hands,[16] nor bade farewell to him,

[4] MY CAPTIVITY—In battle.

[5] BROIL—Battle.

[6] CHOKE THEIR ART—Prevent each other from swimming.

[7] WORTHY—Fit only to be a rebel.

[8] FOR TO THAT—For to that end.

[9] MULTIPLYING VILLAINIES OF NATURE DO SWARM UPON HIM—The reference is to the fact that Macdonwald had uttered "manie slanderous words" and "railing taunts" against Duncan, calling him "faynt harted mylksop, more meete to govern a sort of idle monkes in some cloyster than to have ye rule of such valiant and hardy men as the Scottes were."

[10] WESTERN ISLES—Ireland and the islands west of Scotland.

[11] KERNS AND GALLOWGLASSES—Light-armed and heavy-armed footsoldiers. "For out of the western Isles there came unto him a great multitude of people, offering themselves to assist him in that rebellious quarell, and out of Ireland in hope of the spoile came no small number of Kernes and Gallowglasses, offering gladlie to serve under him [Macdonwald], whither it should please him to lead them."—Holinshed's *Chronicles*.

[12] DAMNED—Doomed.

[13] QUARRY—Probably meant for "quarrel."

[14] MINION—Darling, favorite.

[15] WHICH—Who. Refers to Macbeth. It is the equivalent of "And Macbeth, etc."

[16] SHOOK HANDS—Took leave.

Till he unseam'd him from the nave[17] to th' chops,[18]
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.[19]
Duncan. O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!
Captain. As whence the sun 'gins his reflection[20]
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders,
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norweyan[21] lord, surveying vantage,[22]
With furbish'd[23] arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.
Duncan. Dismay'd not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?
Captain. Yes;
As sparrows eagles,[24] or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth,[25] I must report they were
As cannons overcharg'd with double cracks;[26]
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,

---

[17] Nave—Navel.

[18] Chops—Jaws.

[19] Fix'd his head upon our battlements—Holinshed says "Macbeth entring into the castell by the gates . . . found the carcasse of Makdonwald lieing dead. . . . He caused the head to be cut off, and set upon a pole's end."

[20] Reflection—Return. The allusion is to the return of the sun at the spring equinox, a time of storms. Note the pun on the word "spring" in the third line below. The meaning is that, as the spring is a source not only of gladness but of storms as well, so the course of the battle is a cause for joy—the joy at Macbeth's victory, and a cause also for alarm—alarm at the fresh assault begun by the Norweyan lord.

[21] Norweyan—Norwegian.

[22] Surveying vantage—Seeing his opportunity. According to Holinshed, no sooner had Macdonwald been defeated than "Immediatelie . . . woord came that Sueno king of Norway was arrived in Fife with a puissant armie, to subdue the whole realme of Scotland."

[23] Furbish'd—Bright, untarnished, shining.

[24] As sparrows eagles—That is, as much as sparrows might dismay eagles.

[25] Say sooth—Speak truth.

[26] Cracks—Charges of powder.

I cannot tell [27]—
But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.
Duncan. So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They smack of honour both. Go get him surgeons.
[*Exit Captain, attended*

Enter Ross *and* Angus

Who comes here?
Malcolm. The worthy thane of Ross.
Lennox. What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look
That seems to speak things strange.
Ross. God save the king!
Duncan. Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?
Ross. From Fife, great king;
Where the Norweyan banners flout [28] the sky
And fan our people cold.[29]
Norway himself,[30] with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;
Till that Bellona's [31] bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,[32]
Confronted him with self-comparisons,[33]
Point against point, rebellious [34] arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit; [35] and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.

---

[27] Except they meant . . . I cannot tell—The Captain's meaning is: So fierce was their attack that I cannot tell what they meant unless it was to "bathe" in blood or make the place as memorable as another Golgotha. Golgotha is "the place of the skull." See *Matthew* 27:33 and *Mark* 25:22.

[28] Flout—Mock.

[29] Cold—Cold with terror.

[30] Norway himself—The king of Norway: Sueno or Sweno.

[31] Bellona—The old Roman goddess of war. Bellona's bridegroom is, of course, Macbeth.

[32] Lapp'd in proof—Clad in impenetrable armor.

[33] Confronted him with self-comparisons—Matched himself against him.

[34] Rebellious—Resisting, opposing.

[35] Curbing his lavish spirit—Checking his unrestrained daring.

Duncan. Great happiness!
Ross. That now[36]
Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition;[37]
Nor would we deign him burial of his men
Till he disbursed, at Saint Colme's inch,[38]
Ten thousand dollars[39] to our general use.
Duncan. No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest.[40] Go pronounce[41] his present[42] death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth.
Ross. I'll see it done.
Duncan. What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.
[*Exeunt*

---

[36] THAT NOW—So that now. Note that Duncan's speech "Great happiness!" is an exclamation of pleasure and interrupts the speech of Ross. Ross says: The victory fell on us so that now Sweno . . . craves composition.

[37] COMPOSITION—Terms of peace.

[38] SAINT COLME'S INCH—The island of Inchcolm in the Firth of Forth. On this island was the monastery of St. Columba. "Inch" means island, so that "Saint Colme's inch" means St. Columba's Island.

[39] DOLLARS—This word, of course, is not used in a modern sense. It was applied in Shakespeare's time to both the German *thaler* and the Spanish *piece of eight*. Holinshed says: "They . . . obtained of Macbeth for a great summe of gold, that such of their friends as were slaine . . . might be buried in Saint Colme's Inch."

[40] DECEIVE OUR BOSOM INTEREST—Enjoy our confidence in order to betray it.

[41] PRONOUNCE—Declare.

[42] PRESENT—Instant.

SCENE 3

A heath

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES

1 Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?
2 Witch. Killing swine.[1]
3 Witch. Sister, where thou?

---

[1] KILLING SWINE—Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* makes it clear that in Shakespeare's day an animal dying from no apparent cause was popularly believed to have been bewitched.

1 Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munch'd, and munch'd, and munch'd. 'Give me,' quoth I:
'Aroint thee,[2] witch!' the rump-fed[3] ronyon[4] cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo[5] gone, master o' the Tiger:[6]
But in a sieve[7] I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,[8]
I'll do,[9] I'll do, and I'll do.
2 Witch. I'll give thee a wind.[10]
1 Witch. Thou 'rt kind.
3 Witch. And I another.
1 Witch. I myself have all the other;
And the very points they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.[11]
I'll drain him dry as hay.[12]

---

[2] AROINT THEE—Away with you! An expression which was supposed to be especially effective against witches, spirits, and the like.

[3] RUMP-FED—Fat-bottomed.

[4] RONYON—An abusive term for a woman.

[5] ALEPPO—An ancient city of Syria. In Shakespeare's day it was a great commercial center.

[6] TIGER—In Haklyt's *Voyages* there is a long and interesting account of a trip in the Orient made by a merchant who sailed out in a ship called the *Tyger*. Shakespeare no doubt had read this letter and took the name of his ship from it.

[7] SIEVE—Witches were believed to go to sea in sieves. Scot says, "They can go in and out at awger holes, and saile in an egge shelle, a cockel or muscle shell, through and under the tempestuous seas." And in a book entitled *News from Scotland, Declaring the Damnable life and death of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in Ianuary last, 1591,* there is to be found the testimony given before King and Council by an alleged witch who declared that "she . . . with a great number other witches, to the number of two hundred . . . all together went by sea, each one in a riddle or sieve."

[8] WITHOUT A TAIL—Whenever a witch assumed the form of an animal, one might know it by the fact that there would be some defect about the latter—as the "rat without a tail."

[9] I'LL DO—That is, the witch in form of a rat will work the ship some ill, possibly gnawing a hole in the ship's bottom so that it will leak.

[10] GIVE THEE A WIND—Witches were believed to sell winds to sailors. Here the 2nd and 3rd witches each offer to give the 1st witch a wind to keep her in her nefarious business.

[11] SHIPMAN'S CARD—"The mariner's compass. Properly the paper on which the points of the wind are marked."—Nares.

[12] DRAIN HIM DRY AS HAY—See Note 16 below.

Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid; [13]
He shall live a man forbid: [14]
Weary se'nnights nine times nine [15]
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine: [16]
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.[17]
Look what I have.
2 Witch. Show me, show me.
1 Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreck'd as homeward he did come
[*Drum within*
3 Witch. A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.
All. The weird sisters,[18] hand in hand,
Posters [19] of the sea and land,

---

[13] Pent-house lid—Eyelid. The resemblance of the eyebrow to a pent-house is the reason for this figure.

[14] Forbid—Under a curse or ban.

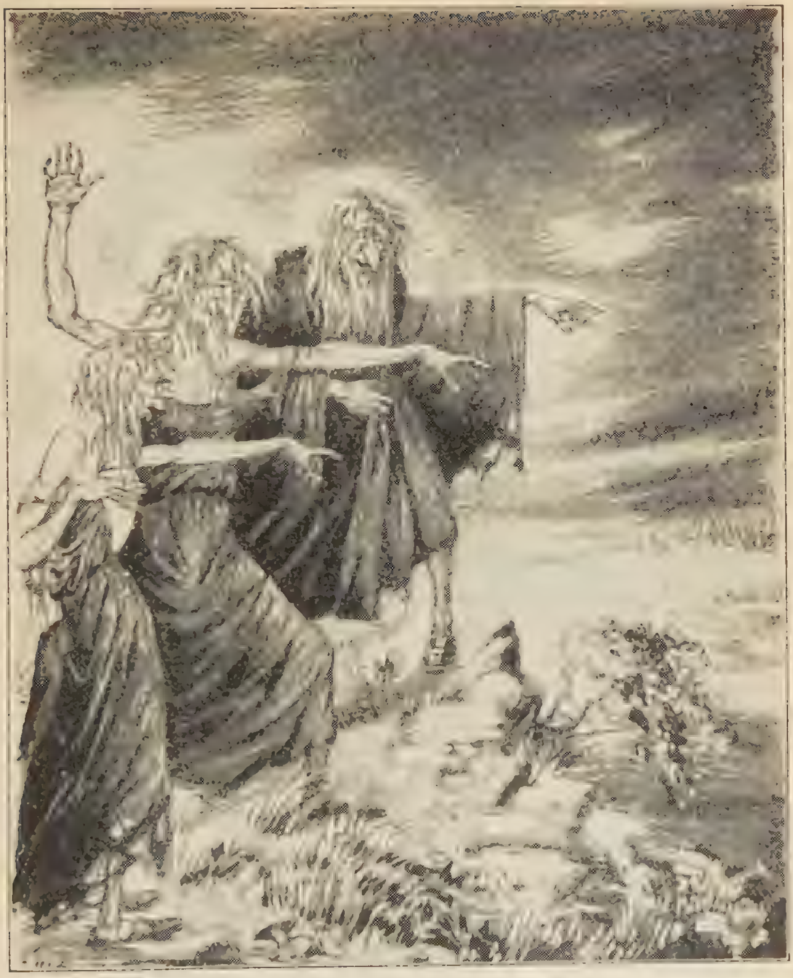
[15] Se'nnights nine times nine—81 weeks.

[16] Dwindle, peak, and pine—Grow thin and waste away. Wasting or consumptive diseases were generally believed to be the work of witches. Holinshed gives an account of the manner in which witches usually proceeded in such cases in his description of the peculiar malady of King Duff. The king "could not sleepe in the night time . . . but fell into exceeding sweats. . . . There was a murmuring amongst the people, how the king was vexed with no naturall sicknesse, but by sorcerie and magicall art, practiced by a sort of witches dwelling in a towne of Murrey land, called Fores." Soldiers sent to break into the house of these witches found one of them "rosting upon a wooden broch an image of wax at the fier resembling in each feature the king's person, made and devised by craft and art of the divell: an other . . . sat reciting certeine words of inchantment." Upon examination these witches declared that the purpose of their rites was "to make away the king, for as the image did waste before the fire, so did the bodie of the king breake foorth in sweat . . . so that as the wax ever melted, so did the king's flesh."

[17] Tempest-tost—King James, I, who caused the King James Version of the Bible to be made, was a believer in witchcraft, and himself wrote a treatise on it, entitled *Daemonologie*. He says: "They [witches] can rayse stormes and tempestes in the aire, either upon sea or land."

[18] Weird sisters—Shakespeare took this expression from Holinshed's account of the meeting of Banquo and Macbeth with the witches—"the common opinion was, that these women were either the weird sisters, that is (as ye would say) the goddesses of destinie, or else some nymphs or feiries."

[19] Posters—Swift travellers. Compare with our expression "post-haste."



1 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!
2 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!
3 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth, that shall be king hereafter!
Act I; *Scene* 3.

Thus do go about,[20] about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! the charm's wound up.[21]

Enter MACBETH *and* BANQUO

Macbeth. So foul and fair [22] a day I have not seen.
Banquo. How far is 't call'd to Forres? [23] What are these
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th' inhabitants o' the earth,[24]
And yet are on 't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy [25] finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.
Macbeth. Speak, if you can: what are you?
1 Witch. All hail, Macbeth! [26] hail to thee, thane of Glamis!
2 Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!
3 Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shall be king hereafter!
Banquo. Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair?—I' the name of truth,

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[20] THUS DO GO ABOUT—That is, join hands and dance about in a ring. The witches go about three times for each "to make up nine." Numbers, especially odd numbers, and in particular three and nine, were formerly believed to have magical properties.

[21] THE CHARM'S WOUND UP—The dance of the weird sisters has perfected the charm or spell which they will cast over Macbeth.

[22] FOUL AND FAIR—Where have the words appeared before?

[23] FORRES—"A town of Murrey land, called Fores."

[24] SO WITHER'D, AND SO WILD . . . TH' INHABITANTS O' THE EARTH—Holinshed described them as "three women in strange and wild apparrell, resembling creatures of elder world." Which description, Holinshed's or Shakespeare's, appeals more to the imagination?

[25] CHOPPY—Chapped.

[26] ALL HAIL, MACBETH!—Holinshed's account reads: "The first of them spake and said: All haile Makbeth, thane of Glammis (for he had latelie entered into that dignitie and office by the death of his father Sinell). The second of them said; Haile Makbeth thane of Cawder. But the third said; All haile Makbeth that heerafter shalt be king of Scotland."

Are ye[27] fantastical,[28] or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace[29] and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt[30] withal;[31] to me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time,[32]
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak, then, to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.
1 Witch. Hail!
2 Witch. Hail!
3 Witch. Hail!
1 Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.
2 Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier.
3 Witch. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!
1 Witch. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!
Macbeth. Stay, you imperfect[33] speakers, tell me more:
By Sinel's[34] death I know I am thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman,[35] and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief[36]

---

[27] YE—The weird sisters.

[28] FANTASTICAL—Creatures of the fancy or imagination.

[29] PRESENT GRACE—This goes with "noble having" in the line below, and "great prediction" goes with "royal hope," so that the meaning is "present grace of noble having" and "great prediction of royal hope." The first expression refers to the greeting of the first two witches who greet Macbeth by the noble titles he at present has. The second expression refers to the greeting of the third witch who hails Macbeth with the prophecy, or prediction, that he shall be king.

[30] RAPT—As if in a trance.

[31] WITHAL—With it. That is, with your greeting.

[32] LOOK INTO THE SEEDS OF TIME—Foretell the future. Is this a vivid expression?

[33] IMPERFECT—Unfinished. That is, who have not told all.

[34] SINEL—Macbeth's father.

[35] THE THANE OF CAWDOR LIVES, A PROSPEROUS GENTLEMAN—Macbeth speaks as if he knew nothing of the treachery of the thane of Cawdor.

[36] STANDS NOT WITHIN THE PROSPECT OF BELIEF—That is, seems an unbelievable thing.

No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence? or why
Upon this lasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.
[*Witches vanish*

Banquo. The earth hath bubbles as the water has,[37]
And these[38] are of them. Whither are they vanish'd?
Macbeth. Into the air; and what seem'd corporal[39] melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!
Banquo. Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root[40]
That takes the reason prisoner?
Macbeth. Your children shall be kings.
Banquo. You shall be king.
Macbeth. And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?
Banquo. To th' selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter Ross *and* Angus

Ross. The king hath happily receiv'd, Macbeth,
The news of thy success: and, when he reads
Thy personal venture[41] in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his:[42] silenc'd with that,

---

[37] The earth hath bubbles as the water has—To Banquo (băng-kō) the witches are of no significance. He neither fears them nor attaches any importance to their words—they are as bubbles.

[38] These—The witches.

[39] Corporal—Corporeal, having a body, having substance.

[40] Insane root—It was the belief of the time that there were certain herbs and roots which, when eaten, produced madness. It is possible that Shakespeare had in mind a passage in Plutarch's life of Marcus Antonius whose soldiers in the Parthian War were reduced to the necessity of eating certain herbs and roots which "made them out of their wits."

[41] Personal venture—That is, the risk Macbeth took in person in seeking out and fighting Macdonwald. See the Captain's account of this venture in Scene 2 above.

[42] His wonders and his praises do contend which should be thine or his—"Thine" goes with "praises," and "his" with "wonders." The meaning is: He is struck speechless (silenced with that) between trying to express his own wonder and your praises at the same time.

In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
Nothing afeard[43] of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death.[44] As thick as tale[45]
Came post with post;[46] and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.
Angus. We are sent
To give thee from our royal master thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.
Ross. And, for an earnest[47] of a greater honour,
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor;
In which addition,[48] hail, most worthy thane!
For it is thine.
Banquo. [*Aside*] What, can the devil speak true?
Macbeth. The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me
In borrow'd robes?
Angus. Who was the thane lives yet;
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combin'd
With those of Norway, or did line[49] the rebel
With hidden help and vantage,[50] or that with both
He labour'd in his country's wreck,[51] I know not;
But treasons capital,[52] confess'd and prov'd,
Have overthrown him.
Macbeth. [*Aside*] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!

---

[43] Nothing afeard—Not at all afraid.

[44] Strange images of death—Death as represented, or imaged, in those slain by Macbeth. The meaning is that Macbeth himself did not fear the fate which he saw overtake others at his hand.

[45] As thick as tale—That is, as fast as one could count.

[46] Post with post—Messenger after messenger.

[47] Earnest—Promise.

[48] Addition—That is, title added to your name.

[49] Line—Strengthen, reinforce.

[50] Vantage—Benefit, assistance.

[51] Labour'd in his country's wreck—Strove to bring about his country's downfall.

[52] Treasons capital—Acts of treason punishable by death.

The greatest is behind.[53] [*To Ross and Angus*] Thanks for your pains.
[*To Banquo*] Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promis'd no less to them?
Banquo. That [54] trusted home [55]
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,[56]
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange;
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
In deepest consequence.[57]
Cousins,[58] a word, I pray you.
Macbeth. [*Aside*] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act [59]
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.—
[*Aside*] This supernatural soliciting [60]
Cannot be ill; cannot be good: if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest [61] of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion [62]

---

[53] THE GREATEST IS BEHIND—The greatest honor is yet to come.

[54] THAT—The prophecy of the witches.

[55] TRUSTED HOME—Taken too seriously.

[56] ENKINDLE YOU UNTO THE CROWN—Incite you to obtain the crown.

[57] BUT 'TIS STRANGE; AND OFTENTIMES . . . DEEPEST CONSEQUENCE—Banquo's meaning is that when men enter upon evil doing they are often so deceived by their initial good fortune that they cannot be convinced that they will come to grief in the end.

[58] COUSINS—A form of address applied to a distant relative, or sometimes by one nobleman to another. Banquo here speaks apart to Ross and Angus, leaving Macbeth free to speak his long *Aside*.

[59] HAPPY PROLOGUES TO THE SWELLING ACT—This figure is taken from the stage. A prologue is a part delivered before a play by way of introduction or preface to the play. By the "two truths" Macbeth has reference to the fact that the greetings of the first two witches, who hailed him as "thane of Glamis" and "thane of Cawdor," have come true. "Happy" means favorable or propitious. "Swelling" means glorious. "Imperial" means kingly. Macbeth's imagination has caught fire. He conceives of what has happened as a promising prologue to a glorious drama which is about to begin.

[60] SOLICITING—Prompting, incitement. [61] EARNEST—Promise.

[62] SUGGESTION—That is, the thought of murdering Duncan.

Whose horrid image [63] doth unfix my hair [64]
And make my seated [65] heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? [66] Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,[67]
Shakes so my single state of man [68] that function
Is smother'd in surmise,[69] and nothing is
But what is not.[70]
Banquo. Look, how our partner's rapt.
Macbeth. [*Aside*] If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,
Without my stir.
Banquo. New honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould
But with the aid of use.
Macbeth. [*Aside*] Come what come may,
Time and the hour [71] runs through the roughest day.
Banquo. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.
Macbeth. Give me your favour: [72] my dull brain was wrought [73]
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd [74] where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.[75]

---

[63] IMAGE—Macbeth has a vivid imagination. He can see the deed as done.

[64] UNFIX MY HAIR—Make it stand on end.

[65] SEATED—Firmly fixed.

[66] AGAINST THE USE OF NATURE—That is, unnaturally. "Use" means custom.

[67] WHOSE MURDER YET IS BUT FANTASTICAL—In which the murder is now only an imagined deed.

[68] MY SINGLE STATE OF MAN—My whole being.

[69] FUNCTION IS SMOTHER'D IN SURMISE—Power to do the deed is paralyzed by the horror which thinking about it arouses.

[70] NOTHING IS BUT WHAT IS NOT—That is, the only realities to Macbeth are the devisings of his heated imagination.

[71] TIME AND THE HOUR—The meaning is that by biding one's time and seizing favorable opportunity, one can overcome the greatest of difficulties.

[72] GIVE ME YOUR FAVOR—Pardon me.

[73] WROUGHT—Moved. Macbeth pretends that he has been lost in thought trying to recall some forgotten matter.

[74] REGISTER'D—That is, in his memory.

[75] LET US TOWARD THE KING—This part of the speech is addressed to Banquo.

Think upon what hath chanc'd;[76] and, at more time,
The interim having weigh'd it,[77] let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.
Banquo. Very gladly.
Macbeth. Till then, enough. Come, friends. [*Exeunt*

---

[76] Chanc'd—Happened. Macbeth here has reference to the meeting with the witches.

[77] The interim having weigh'd it—In the meanwhile having thought it over.

Scene 4

Forres. The palace

Flourish. Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lennox, *and* Attendants

Duncan. Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission[1] yet return'd?
Malcolm. My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die; who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implor'd your highness' pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance: nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied[2] in his death
To throw away the dearest thing he ow'd,
As 'twere a careless[3] trifle.
Duncan. There's no art[4]
To find the mind's construction[5] in the face;
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

---

[1] Those in commission—Those commissioned, or charged to see the execution done on Cawdor.

[2] As one that had been studied—As an actor who had studied it as a "part" until he had become perfect in it.

[3] Careless—Uncared for.

[4] Art—Learning.

[5] Construction—Meaning, intent.

Enter Macbeth, Banquo, Ross, *and* Angus

O worthiest cousin![6]
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before,
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee.[7] Would thou hadst less deserv'd,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine![8] Only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.
Macbeth. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself.[9] Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties; and our duties
Are to your throne and state children and servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing every thing
Safe toward your love and honour.[10]
Duncan. Welcome hither:
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing. Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserv'd, nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.
Banquo. There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.
Duncan. My plenteous joys,
Wanton[11] in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow.[12] Sons, kinsmen, thanes,

---

[6] Worthiest cousin—Macbeth.

[7] Thou art so far before . . . overtake thee—The meaning is made clear by the direct statement in the last line of Duncan's speech.

[8] That the proportion . . . might have been mine—That is, that I might have been able to reward you both in honors and gratitude in proportion to your deserts.

[9] The service . . . pays itself—Macbeth's meaning is: To be able to do you a loyal service is reward enough.

[10] Safe toward your love and honour—That is, which will make you loved and honored.

[11] Wanton—Unrestrained.

[12] Drops of sorrow—Tears. The meaning is: My joys are so great that they bring tears to my eyes.

And you whose places are the nearest, know,
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland; [13] which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers.[14] From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.
Macbeth. The rest is labour, which is not us'd for you.[15]
I'll be myself the harbinger,[16] and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach;
So humbly take my leave.
Duncan. My worthy Cawdor!
Macbeth. [*Aside*] The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires;
The eye wink at [17] the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. [*Exit*

---

[13] PRINCE OF CUMBERLAND—The crown of Scotland was elective rather than hereditary, which means that the king's eldest son did not succeed to the throne by right of birth. The final choice of their king lay with the thanes, and they might set aside an immediate heir in favor of one whom they thought more competent. Both Duncan and Macbeth were sons of two daughters of the old King Malcolm, so that Macbeth had some claim to the throne. Holinshed says that Macbeth was "sore troubled" at Duncan's nominating his son as his successor, for he felt that Duncan's act was done to "defraude them of all manner of title and claime, which he might in time to come pretend unto the crowne."

[14] WHICH HONOR . . . ON ALL DESERVERS—Duncan's meaning is that Malcolm shall not be the only one to enjoy honor, but that all who have deserved it (especially Banquo and Macbeth) shall be held in high esteem according to their merits. This speech must have irritated Macbeth, for to Malcolm goes the very substantial honor of being named Duncan's successor, while Macbeth who feels himself better fitted to be king must be content with nothing more substantial than high esteem.

[15] THE REST IS LABOUR, WHICH IS NOT US'D FOR YOU—Macbeth's meaning is that the rest which is not spent in Duncan's service is labor. Is he sincere?

[16] HARBINGER—Forerunner. An officer whose duty it was to go ahead and make provision for the king and his retinue. The connection between this and the preceding line lies in Macbeth's implication that he will employ his "rest" in Duncan's service and carry the news to Inverness.

[17] WINK AT—Fail to see.

Duncan. True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant,[18]
And in his commendations I am fed;[19]
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome.
It[20] is a peerless kinsman. [*Flourish. Exeunt*

---

[18] True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant—The "he" in this speech refers to Macbeth. While Macbeth has been speaking his *Aside* Banquo has been speaking in praise of Macbeth to Duncan. Duncan is confirming some remark of Banquo's with the words: "(That is) true, worthy Banquo."

[19] In his commendations I am fed—Praise to him is like food to me.

[20] It—Refers to Macbeth, who was Duncan's kinsman. See Note 13 above.

Scene 5

Inverness. Macbeth's *castle*

Enter Lady Macbeth, *alone, with a letter*

Lady Macbeth. [*Reads*] They[1] met me in the day of success; and I have learn'd by the perfect'st report,[2] they have more in them than mortal knowledge.[3] When I burn'd in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanish'd. Whiles I stoop rapt in the wonder of it, came missives[4] from the King, who all-hail'd me 'Thane of Cawdor'; by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referr'd me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee,[5] my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing,[6] by being ignorant of what greatness is promis'd thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.

---

[1] They—The witches.

[2] By the perfect'st report—From the most reliable source. Macbeth may be making reference here to the fact that one of the prophecies has actually come true, or it may be that he has been making some inquiry into the power of the witches and is convinced that they actually have more than mortal knowledge.

[3] More in them than mortal knowledge—That they have supernatural means of finding out things not known to mortals.

[4] Missives—Messengers.

[5] Deliver thee—Communicate to you.

[6] Lose the dues of rejoicing—That is, that you might not lose any of the rejoicing which is your due.

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promis'd. Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness[7]
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
Art[8] not without ambition, but without
The illness[9] should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily;[10] wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win:[11] thou 'ldst have, great Glamis,
That which[12] cries, 'Thus thou must do,' if thou have it;
And that[13] which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round[14]
Which fate and metaphysical[15] aid doth seem
To[16] have thee crown'd withal.[17]

---

[7] Human kindness—"Compassion characteristic of humane persons."

[8] Art—Thou art.

[9] Illness—Wickedness, unscrupulousness.

[10] What thou wouldst highly, that wouldst thou holily—Whatever great honors you wish, you prefer to come by them legitimately.

[11] Wouldst not play false, and yet wouldst wrongly win—You will not play false, yet you covet a thing which can be won only by dishonest means. There is perhaps the further meaning here: Although you will not play false yourself, you have no scruples about accepting a result brought about dishonestly, like one who will not steal yet will not hesitate to keep a sum of money which he has found even though he knows the loser.

[12] That which—That is, the crown. The meaning is: You would have the crown, which cries, "Thus (murder Duncan) thou must do, if you have me."

[13] And that—The full sense is: And you would also have that, etc.

[14] Golden round—The crown.

[15] Metaphysical—Supernatural.

[16] Seem to—Is about to.

[17] Withal—With.

Enter a MESSENGER

What is your tidings?
Messenger. The king comes here to-night.
Lady Macbeth. Thou 'rt mad to say it:
Is not thy master with him? who, were 't so,
Would have inform'd for preparation.
Messenger. So please you, it is true; our thane is coming.

One of my fellows had the speed of him,[18]
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.
Lady Macbeth. Give him tending;[19]
He brings great news. [*Exit Messenger*
The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements.[20] Come, you spirits
That tend on[21] mortal[22] thoughts, unsex[23] me here;
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;[24]
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature[25]
Shake my fell[26] purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it![27] Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall,[28] you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless[29] substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall[30] thee in the dunnest[31] smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,

---

[18] Had the speed of him—Outdistanced him.

[19] Give him tending—This line is addressed to some servant, directing him to take care of the messenger.

[20] The raven himself . . . under my battlements—The raven formerly enjoyed the reputation of being a bird of ill omen. Lady Macbeth means that the raven that croaks at the entrance of Duncan into Macbeth's castle must croak himself hoarse if his croaking is to be proportionate to the evil which will befall Duncan.

[21] Tend on—Attend, accompany, or bring in your train.

[22] Mortal—Deadly, murderous.

[23] Unsex—Divest me of the tender and merciful nature which is woman's.

[24] Make thick my blood—According to the physiology of Shakespeare's day, "spirits" passed along the blood. Lady Macbeth asks that her blood may become thick to stop the passage of remorse (the "spirit" of pity) so that it may not find access (entrance) into her heart.

[25] Compunctious visitings of nature—Natural feelings of compunction.

[26] Fell—Fierce, cruel.

[27] Nor keep peace between the effect and it—Come as a peacemaker between the purpose and the effect, or execution.

[28] Take my milk for gall—Turn my milk into gall.

[29] Sightless—Invisible.

[30] Pall—Wrap.

[31] Dunnest—Darkest.

Nor heaven peep through the blanket [32] of the dark,
To cry, 'Hold, hold!'

Enter MACBETH

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter! [33]
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present,[34] and I feel now
The future in the instant.[35]
Macbeth. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.
Lady Macbeth. And when goes hence?
Macbeth. To-morrow, as he purposes.
Lady Macbeth. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; [36] bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue; look like the innocent flower
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for; and you shall put
This night's great business [37] into my dispatch,[38]
Which [39] shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.[40]

---

[32] BLANKET—The darkness which Lady Macbeth wishes to have cover the deed.

[33] THE ALL-HAIL HEREAFTER—The reference is to the greeting of the third witch: "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter."

[34] IGNORANT PRESENT—The present which is ignorant of what is to come.

[35] FEEL NOW THE FUTURE IN THE INSTANT—I feel as though what is to come had already happened.

[36] TO BEGUILE THE TIME, LOOK LIKE THE TIME—"Time" here means the occasion, which is one for display of hospitality. The lines following make Lady Macbeth's meaning clear—to deceive those present at the "time," behave in the manner the "time" requires.

[37] GREAT BUSINESS—That is, the murder of Duncan.

[38] DISPATCH—Management.

[39] WHICH—Modifies "great business."

[40] SHALL TO ALL OUR NIGHTS AND DAYS . . . SWAY AND MASTERDOM—That is, shall give us the kingdom and make us masters of the situation henceforth.

Macbeth. We will speak further.
Lady Macbeth. Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear.[41]
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt*

[41] ONLY LOOK UP CLEAR; TO ALTER FAVOUR EVER IS TO FEAR—That is, do not let your face betray us, to change countenance (alter favour) is to show signs of fear.

SCENE 6

Before MACBETH'S *castle*

Hautboys[1] *and torches. Enter* DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, *and* Attendants

Duncan. This castle hath a pleasant seat;[2] the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.[3]
Banquo. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting[4] martlet,[5] does approve,[6]
By his lov'd mansionry,[7] that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty,[8] frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage,[9] but this bird
Hath made his pendent[10] bed and procreant cradle:[11]
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
The air is delicate.

---

[1] *Hautboys* (hō'boi)—A high-pitched instrument, sounded to announce the entrance of Duncan.

[2] SEAT—Site, situation.

[3] THE AIR NIMBLY AND SWEETLY RECOMMENDS ITSELF UNTO OUR GENTLE SENSES—The meaning is: Our senses are themselves made gentle by the briskness and sweetness of the air.

[4] TEMPLE-HAUNTING—An allusion possibly to the habit of the martin, which nests in church towers.

[5] MARTLET—The house-martin.

[6] APPROVE—Prove.

[7] MANSIONRY—Building.

[8] JUTTY—Projection.

[9] COIGN OF VANTAGE—Convenient corner or nook.

[10] PENDENT—An allusion possibly to the way in which the nest built on some slight "jutty" projected out or over-hung the edge.

[11] PROCREANT CRADLE—Cradle for bringing forth young.

Enter Lady Macbeth

Duncan. See, see, our honour'd hostess!
The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love.[12] Herein [13] I teach you
How you shall bid God 'ild us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.
Lady Macbeth. All our service
In every point twice done and then done double
Were poor and single business to contend [14]
Against those honours deep and broad wherewith
Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.[15]
Duncan. Where's the thane of Cawdor?
We cours'd [16] him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor: [17] but he rides well,
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp [18] him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.
Lady Macbeth. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,
To make their audit [19] at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.

---

[12] The love that follows us . . . we thank as love—Duncan means that the love which others have for us (follows us) sometimes puts us to trouble, yet we are grateful for it.

[13] Herein—The meaning is: Since, therefore, it is our love which puts you to your pains and trouble now, you may ask God to reward us for causing you the trouble of entertaining us.

[14] Single business to contend—That is, a weak repayment for those honors, etc.

[15] We rest your hermits—We remain, so to speak, your beadsmen. The meaning is made clear by the definition of beadsman—one who having received alms from another is bound to pray for his benefactor.

[16] Cours'd—Pursued, followed closely.

[17] Puveyor—Forerunner.

[18] Holp—Helped.

[19] In compt, to make their audit—The meaning of these lines is that all your subjects have, they hold but in compt, that is, subject to account. against the day it shall please you to make their audit (call them to account).

Duncan. Give me your hand;
Conduct me to mine host: we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave,[20] hostess. [*Exeunt*

[20] By your leave—Duncan, with these words, gives his hand to Lady Macbeth and leads her into the castle.

Scene 7

Macbeth's *castle*

Hautboys and torches. Enter a Sewer,[1] *and divers* Servants *with dishes and service, over the stage. Then enter* Macbeth

Macbeth. If it were done when 'tis done,[2] then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if th' assassination
Could trammel up[3] the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success;[4] that but[5] this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here,[6] upon this bank and shoal of time,[7]
We'd jump the life to come.[8] But in these cases
We still[9] have judgment here,[10] that[11] we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague th' inventor:[12] this even-handed justice

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[1] Sewer—A servant, or officer of the household, who carried in and arranged dishes for a banquet. These servants pass over the stage to the banquet hall. Macbeth has left the table, much perturbed by the fears and imaginings which he voices in his soliloquy.

[2] If it were done when 'tis done—That is, if the deed when done only ended the matter, and there were no consequences.

[3] Trammel up—Prevent. To trammel up means literally to catch as in a net—to tangle up, and thus prevent the consequences from following.

[4] And catch with his (its) surcease success—That is, bring success with its cessation. Macbeth uses the term surcease, or cessation, to describe such a deed as he has described above—that is over when it is done, and has no consequences—a "be-all and end-all."

[5] That but—If only. [6] But here—Only here.

[7] Upon this bank and shoal of time—Upon this earth.

[8] Jump the life to come—Risk or chance what will happen in the life to come. [9] Still—Always.

[10] Have judgment here—Meet retribution here.

[11] That—So that; and that judgment is that.

[12] We but teach bloody instructions . . . plague th' inventor—That is, all we do is to teach others by example what they shall do to us.

Commends[13] th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice[14]
To our own lips. He's[15] here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman[16] and his subject,
Strong both[17] against the deed; then, as his host,[18]
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek,[19] hath been
So clear in his great office,[20] that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd,[21] against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;[22]
And pity, like a naked new-born babe
Striding the blast,[23] or heaven's cherubin hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,[24]
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.[25] I have no spur
To prick[26] the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on th' other.[27]

---

[13] COMMENDS—Delivers.

[14] CHALICE—Cup. The meaning is made clear by Holinshed: "For the pricks of conscience . . . caused him ever to feare, least he should be served of the same cupe, as he had ministered to his predecessour."

[15] HE'S—Duncan.

[16] KINSMAN—Macbeth and Duncan were cousins.

[17] STRONG BOTH—Both strong reasons why I should not kill him.

[18] THEN, AS HIS HOST—Moreover, I am his host.

[19] BORNE HIS FACULTIES SO MEEK—Exercised his powers in so mild a manner. Holinshed says that Duncan was "soft and gentle of nature."

[20] SO CLEAR IN HIS GREAT OFFICE—So free from fault as a king.

[21] TRUMPET-TONGU'D—Like the angels of the Day of Judgment whose trumpets shall be heard by all.

[22] TAKING-OFF—Murder.

[23] LIKE A NAKED NEW-BORN BABE STRIDING THE BLAST—See *Psalm* 18:10. "And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind."

[24] SIGHTLESS COURIERS OF THE AIR—The viewless winds.

[25] TEARS SHALL DROWN THE WIND—"This image of a shower of tears, in which the storm of passion expends itself, is very common in Shakespeare."—Delius.

[26] PRICK—To prick with a spur.

[27] VAULTING AMBITION, WHICH O'ERLEAPS ITSELF AND FALLS ON TH' OTHER—The image is that of a horseman who has put his horse over (vaulted) an obstacle only to fall on the other side.

Enter Lady Macbeth

How now! what news?

Lady Macbeth. He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

Macbeth. Hath he ask'd for me?

Lady Macbeth. Know you not he has?

Macbeth. We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought[28]
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.[29]

Lady Macbeth. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely?[30] From this time
Such I account thy love.[31] Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i' the adage?[32]

Macbeth. Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

---

[28] Bought—Acquired.

[29] Golden opinions from all sorts of people . . . not cast aside so soon—The meaning is that Macbeth's deeds have earned him the great esteem of all classes and that he feels he should enjoy that esteem rather than lose it by murdering Duncan.

[30] Was the hope drunk . . . at what it did so freely—The meaning is: Was the hope (that is, the hope of being able to murder Duncan) like that of a drunken man, who while he is drunk plans and dares great things, but who when he wakes green and pale from his debauch finds himself without the daring which drink gave him.

[31] Such I account thy love—Lady Macbeth means that henceforth she will regard his love for her as nothing more than the maudlin protestation of a drunken man.

[32] The adage—The proverb alluded to is: "The cate would eate fyshe, but she wyll not weate her feete."

Lady Macbeth. What beast[33] was 't, then,
That made you break this enterprise[34] to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere,[35] and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.
Macbeth. If we should fail?
Lady Macbeth. We fail.
But[36] screw your courage to the sticking-place,[37]
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather[38] shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail[39] so convince,[40]
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason

---

[33] BEAST—Lady Macbeth uses this term in contrast with "man" used by Macbeth in the speech above.

[34] BREAK THIS ENTERPRISE—Propose the murder of Duncan. This line indicates to some students of the play that the "enterprise" originated with Macbeth. Others think that the enterprise really originated with her under the inspiration of Macbeth's letter, and that she can believe, or say at least, that she has only followed him.

[35] ADHERE—Agree, that is, present themselves opportunely together. The meaning of the passage is: When you first proposed to murder Duncan, you were held back only by want of a good opportunity. You were so hot to do it then that you were all for creating such an opportunity. Now that opportunity (time and place) has presented itself you are unnerved by it.

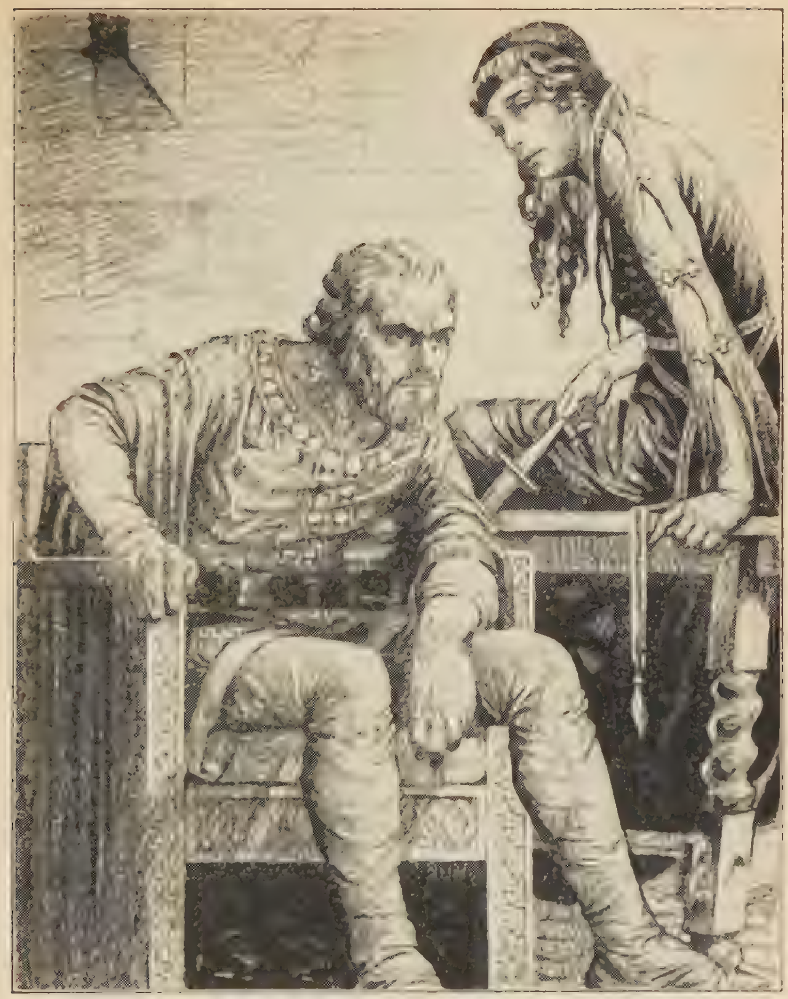
[36] BUT—Only.

[37] SCREW YOUR COURAGE TO THE STICKING-PLACE—The allusion is to screwing up the strings of a musical instrument to their proper degree of tension, "when the peg remains fast in its 'sticking place.'"

[38] THE RATHER—The more quickly.

[39] WINE AND WASSAIL—Wine and carousal.

[40] CONVINCE—Overcome.



Macbeth. I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show;
False face must hide what false heart doth know.

Act I; *Scene* 7.

A limbeck only:[41] when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
Th' unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy[42] officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?[43]
Macbeth. Bring forth men-children only;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be receiv'd,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber and us'd their very daggers,
That they have done 't?
Lady Macbeth. Who dares receive it other,[44]
As[45] we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?
Macbeth. I am settled, and bend up[46]
Each corporal agent[47] to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time[48] with fairest show;
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.
[*Exeunt*

---

[41] The warder of the brain . . . a limbeck only—According to the anatomy of Shakespeare's day, the brain was believed to be divided into three ventricles, or cavities. The memory was thought to be situated in the one at the base of the brain where the spinal cord enters. In this position the memory served, like the warder or sentinel of a castle, to warn the reason against attack. "When the memory is converted by intoxication into a mere fume, then it fills the brain itself, the receipt or receptacle of reason, which thus becomes like an alembic"—a vessel used in distilling into which the vapor, or fume, rises.

[42] Spongy—Drunken.

[43] Quell—Murder, slaying.

[44] Other—Otherwise.

[45] As—Since, seeing that.

[46] Bend up—Nerve, strain.

[47] Corporal agent—Physical power.

[48] Mock the time—See Act I, Scene 5, Note 36 above.

ACT II

SCENE I

Inverness. Court of MACBETH'S *castle*

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *with a torch before him*

Banquo. How goes the night, boy?
Fleance. The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.
Banquo. And she goes down at twelve.
Fleance. I take 't, 'tis later, sir.
Banquo. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry [1] in heaven;
Their candles [2] are all out. Take thee that too.[3]
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose! [4]

Enter MACBETH, *and a* Servant *with a torch*

Give me my sword.[5]
Who's there?
Macbeth. A friend.
Banquo. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess [6] to your offices: [7]
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up
In measureless content.[8]

---

[1] HUSBANDRY—Economy, thrift. [2] CANDLES—The stars.

[3] TAKE THEE THAT TOO—Banquo hands Fleance some weapon.

[4] THE CURSED THOUGHTS THAT NATURE GIVES WAY TO IN REPOSE—The dreams of the weird sisters which Banquo mentions in a speech below.

[5] GIVE ME MY SWORD—Hearing footsteps approaching, Banquo calls for his sword. [6] LARGESS—Gifts.

[7] OFFICES—That is, to Macbeth's household officers.

[8] SHUT UP IN MEASURELESS CONTENT—Probably means "as one whose satisfaction is complete."

Macbeth. Being unprepar'd,
Our will became the servant to defect;
Which else should free have wrought.[9]
Banquo. All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth.
Macbeth. I think not of them;
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,[10]
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.
Banquo. At your kind'st leisure.
Macbeth. If you shall cleave to my consent, when 't is,
It shall make honour for you.[11]
Banquo. So[12] I lose none[13]
In seeking to augment[14] it, but still keep
My bosom franchis'd,[15] and allegiance clear,[16]
I shall be counsell'd.[17]
Macbeth. Good repose the while!
Banquo. Thanks, sir: the like to you!
[*Exeunt Banquo and Fleance*
Macbeth. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink[18] is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. [*Exit Servant*[19]
Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

---

[9] BEING UNPREPAR'D . . . WHICH ELSE SHOULD FREE HAVE WROUGHT—The meaning is: Not being prepared for the king's coming, our natural desire (will) to receive him with the ceremony and hospitality due him has been thwarted by our not having had sufficient time to make adequate preparation.

[10] ENTREAT AN HOUR TO SERVE—That is, find an hour convenient to the purpose.

[11] CLEAVE TO MY CONSENT, WHEN 'T IS, IT SHALL MAKE HONOUR FOR YOU—The meaning is: If you shall consent to my plan, when I unfold it to you, it will bring you honor.

[12] SO—Provided that.

[13] NONE—That is, no honor.

[14] AUGMENT—Increase.

[15] BOSOM FRANCHIS'D—That is, free from dishonor.

[16] ALLEGIANCE CLEAR—Loyalty to the king untarnished.

[17] COUNSELL'D—I shall listen to your plan.

[18] DRINK—The drink which will give Macbeth courage.

[19] *Exit Servant*—Macbeth is now left alone in the darkness.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible[20]
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable[21]
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me[22] the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest:[23] I see thee still;
And on thy blade and dudgeon[24] gouts[25] of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs[26]
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world[27]
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep;[28] witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings;[29] and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl 's his watch,[30] thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides,[31] towards his design

---

[20] SENSIBLE—Material, perceptible to the senses.

[21] PALPABLE—Capable of being touched.

[22] MARSHALL'ST ME—The dagger seems to move farther from him, leading him on.

[23] THE FOOLS O' THE OTHER SENSES, OR ELSE WORTH ALL THE REST—Either his eyes are made the fools of his imagination, since he sees what is not, or else they are worth more, since they can see what he cannot clutch with his hand.

[24] DUDGEON—Haft or hilt.

[25] GOUTS—Drops, smears.

[26] INFORMS—Takes form.

[27] THE ONE HALF-WORLD—Half the world, this hemisphere.

[28] CURTAIN'D SLEEP—The Elizabethan bed was hung about with curtains.

[29] WITCHCRAFT CELEBRATES PALE HECATE'S OFFERINGS—Performs the rites dedicated or offered to Hecate. In Greek mythology Hecate was queen of Hades, or the underworld. The modern pronunciation is hĕk′a-tē. Shakespeare employs it as if it were a word of two syllables, possibly hĕk′āte.

[30] WHOSE HOWL 'S HIS WATCH—The "his" refers to murder, that is, the murderer. The allusion is to the watch who used to go about the city and cry out the hour, as, "Twelve o'clock and all's well." The wolf is thought of here as the murder's watch, whose howl means: "Now is the time for your deed and all's well."

[31] WITH TARQUIN'S RAVISHING STRIDES—The murderer is pictured as approaching his victim with the stealthy strides of Tarquin going to ravish Lucrece.

Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate[32] of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.[33] Whiles I threat,[34] he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.[35]
[*A bell rings*
I go, and it is done; the bell[36] invites me.
Hear it not Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell. [*Exit*

---

[32] PRATE—Cry out.

[33] AND TAKE THE PRESENT HORROR FROM THE TIME, WHICH NOW SUITS WITH IT—That is, And break the silence that added such horror to the night and made it the more suitable for the murder.

[34] THREAT—Make my threats or threaten.

[35] WORDS TO THE HEAT OF DEEDS TOO COLD BREATH GIVES—That is, when the time requires action, talking about what one is going to do accomplishes nothing.

[36] THE BELL—The bell which Lady Macbeth was to ring when Macbeth's drink was ready. It probably was intended also to signify that Duncan and his grooms were asleep and that the daggers were laid ready for the murder.

SCENE 2

The same

Enter LADY MACBETH

Lady Macbeth. That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quench'd them[1] hath given me fire.[2] Hark! Peace!
It was the owl[3] that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,[4]

---

[1] QUENCH'D THEM—Put them to sleep. Lady Macbeth refers to the grooms whose possets she has drugged.

[2] GIVEN ME FIRE—She has fired her courage with drink.

[3] OWL—Commonly supposed to be a bird of ill omen.

[4] FATAL BELLMAN—The custom of having a bellman, or crier, warn prisoners in Newgate Prison who were to be executed the day following is thus described by another Elizabethan dramatist

"I am the common bellman
That usually is sent to condemn'd persons
The night before they suffer."—Webster, *Duchess of Malfi.*

Which gives the stern'st good-night. He[5] is about it:
The doors are open; and the surfeited[6] grooms
Do mock their charge[7] with snores: I have drugg'd their possets,[8]
That[9] death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. Who's there? what, ho!
Lady Macbeth. Alack, I am afraid they have awak'd,
And 'tis not done.[10] Th' attempt and not the deed
Confounds[11] us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled[12]
My father as he slept, I had done 't. My husband!
Macbeth. I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?
Lady Macbeth. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?
Macbeth. When?
Lady Macbeth Now.
Macbeth. As I descended?
Lady Macbeth. Ay.
Macbeth. Hark!
Who lies i' the second chamber?
Lady Macbeth. Donalbain.
Macbeth. This is a sorry[13] sight. [*Looking on his hands*]
Lady Macbeth. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.
Macbeth. There's one[14] did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried 'Murder!'

---

[5] HE—Macbeth. [6] SURFEITED—Glutted with food and drink.

[7] MOCK THEIR CHARGE—Set at naught their responsibility.

[8] POSSETS—A drink made of "hot milk poured on ale or sack, having sugar, grated bisket, and eggs, with other ingredients boiled in it, which all goes to curd." It seems to have been drunk before retiring to produce sleep.

[9] THAT—So that.

[10] AND 'TIS NOT DONE—That is, the deed of murder is not done.

[11] CONFOUNDS—Ruins. That is, to make an unsuccessful attempt will bring ruin.

[12] HAD HE NOT RESEMBLED—"He" refers to Duncan.

[13] SORRY—Woeful, wretched.

[14] THERE'S ONE—One of those in the second chamber.

That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them[15]
Again to sleep.
Lady Macbeth. There are two lodg'd together.[16]
Macbeth. One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the other,
As[17] they had seen me with these hangman's[18] hands:
Listening their fear, I could not say 'Amen,'
When they did say 'God bless us!'
Lady Macbeth. Consider[19] it not so deeply.
Macbeth. But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'?
I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'
Stuck in my throat.
Lady Macbeth. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways: so, it will make us mad.
Macbeth. Methought I heard a voice[20] cry 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep,'—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave[21] of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,[22]
Chief nourisher in life's feast,—
Lady Macbeth. What do you mean?
Macbeth. Still it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the house:
'Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more!'
Lady Macbeth. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend[23] your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,

---

[15] ADDRESS'D THEM—Prepared themselves.

[16] THERE ARE TWO LODG'D TOGETHER—Two in the second chamber—probably Malcolm and Donalbain.

[17] AS—As if.

[18] HANGMAN'S—Executioner's.

[19] CONSIDER—Think about.

[20] A VOICE—Holinshed says, "The king with this voice being stricken into great dread and terror, passed that night without anie sleepe comming in his eies."

[21] RAVELL'D SLEAVE—Floss silk, sometimes called sleave-silk. A "ravell'd sleave" means a tangled skein of silk.

[22] SECOND COURSE—The meat course, or chief course at a banquet.

[23] UNBEND—Relax, that is, lose your self-control or constancy.

And wash this filthy witness[24] from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.
Macbeth. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on 't again I dare not.
Lady Macbeth. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil.[25] If he do bleed,
I'll gild[26] the faces of the grooms withal;
For it must seem their guilt[27] [*Exit. Knocking within*
Macbeth. Whence is that knocking?
How is 't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here,[28] ha! they pluck out mine eyes![29]
Will all great Neptune's[30] ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous[31] seas incarnadine,[32]
Making the green one red.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH

Lady Macbeth. My hands are of your colour, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within*] I hear a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber.
A little water clears us of this deed:

---

[24] FILTHY WITNESS—The blood on his hand.

[25] PAINTED DEVIL—The picture of a devil. Lady Macbeth implies that there is nothing to fear from the sight of the murdered Duncan.

[26] GILD—Make red.

[27] GUILT—Note the pun or "gild" and "guilt"—a rather ghastly play on words.

[28] WHAT HANDS ARE HERE?—Macbeth speaks as if he now saw the blood on his hands for the first time.

[29] PLUCK OUT MINE EYES—Draw my eyes from their sockets.

[30] NEPTUNE—Roman god of the sea.

[31] MULTITUDINOUS—Is this an effective word to image forth the vastness of the sea?

[32] INCARNADINE—Make red.

How easy is it, then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended.[33] [*Knocking within*] Hark! more knocking.
Get on your night-gown,[34] lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers.[35] Be not lost
So poorly[36] in your thoughts.

Macbeth. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.[37]
[*Knocking within*
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!
[*Exeunt*

---

[33] YOUR CONSTANCY HATH LEFT YOU UNATTENDED—Your firmness has deserted you.

[34] NIGHT-GOWN—Dressing-gown.

[35] LEST OCCASION CALL US, AND SHOW US TO BE WATCHERS—Lady Macbeth admonishes Macbeth to put on his dressing gown so that if the occasion (the knocking) demands them, it will not appear that they have been up.

[36] POORLY—Unworthily.

[37] TO KNOW MY DEED, 'TWERE BEST NOT KNOW MYSELF—Lady Macbeth has urged Macbeth that he cease being "lost so poorly" in his thoughts—in other words, that he be his natural self. His reply means: If to be myself means to realize what I have done, it were best that I should never come back to myself.

SCENE 3

Enter a PORTER.[1] *Knocking within*

Porter. Here's a knocking indeed![2] If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old[3] turning the key. [*Knocking*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub?[4] Here's a farmer, that hang'd himself on the expectation of plenty.[5] Come in time; have napkins[6] enough about you; here you'll sweat for 't. [*Knocking*] Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator[7] that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven.[8] O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither for stealing out of a French hose.[9] Come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose.[10] [*Knocking*] Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are you? But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire. [*Knocking*] Anon, anon![11] I pray you, remember the porter.[12] [*Opens the gate*

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[1] PORTER—The Porter, who has had his share of the night's wassail is drunk. He imagines that he is porter at hell-gate, and that the knocking is that of damned souls seeking entrance. He fumbles at the lock, as the knocking is repeated.

[2] HERE'S A KNOCKING INDEED—As we should say, Here's a good knocking for you!

[3] HAVE OLD—Have one's fill of turning the key.

[4] BEELZEBUB—Prince of devils.

[5] ON THE EXPECTATION OF PLENTY—The farmer had expected a good yield, or a good price for his crop, and being disappointed had hanged himself.

[6] NAPKINS—Handkerchiefs to wipe away the sweat.

Enter MACDUFF *and* LENNOX

Macduff. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late?

Porter. Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock.[13]

Macduff. I believe drink gave thee the lie[14] last night.

Porter. That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me: but I requited him for his lie; and, I think, being too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast[15] him.

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[7] EQUIVOCATOR—One who swore falsely. There is an allusion here to a matter familiar to Shakespeare's audience.

[8] EQUIVOCATE TO HEAVEN—Get himself into heaven through equivocation.

[9] STEALING OUT OF A FRENCH HOSE—An allusion to the practice commonly charged in those days against tailors, that they stole part of the cloth brought to them to be made up. As used here, "hose" means trousers, or breeches.

[10] GOOSE—A tailor's goose is a heavy pressing iron. It got its name from the fact that the handle somewhat resembled the neck of a goose. A pun on "goose" is intended.

[11] ANON, ANON—The customary reply of porters or waiters to their patrons. It means immediately or at once.

[12] REMEMBER THE PORTER—Remember to tip him.

[13] SECOND COCK—About 3 A.M.

[14] LIE—Note the puns on "lie."

[15] CAST—To throw as in wrestling. The Porter speaks as if he had been wrestling with drink which as he says "took up my legs sometime." There is a pun intended here, "cast" being used also in the sense of to cast up or vomit.

Enter MACBETH

Macduff. Is thy master stirring?
Our knocking has awak'ed him; here he comes.
Lennox. Good morrow, noble sir.
Macbeth. Good morrow, both.
Macduff. Is the king stirring, worthy thane?
Macbeth. Not yet.
Macduff. He did command me to call timely[16] on him:
I have almost slipp'd the hour.
Macbeth. I'll bring you to him.
Macduff. I know this is a joyful trouble to you;
But yet 'tis one.
Macbeth. The labour we delight in physics[17] pain.
This is the door.
Macduff. I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited service.[18] [*Exit*
Lennox. Goes the king hence to-day?
Macbeth. He does;—he did appoint so.
Lennox. The night has been unruly:[19] where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death,
And, prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion[20] and confus'd events
New hatch'd to th' woeful time,[21] the obscure[22] bird
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth
Was feverous and did shake.

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[16] TIMELY—Early.

[17] PHYSICS—Heals, or cures.

[18] MY LIMITED SERVICE—Appointed service.

[19] THE NIGHT HAS BEEN UNRULY—It was formerly a general belief that a great calamity in human affairs was foreshadowed by unusual disturbance in the world of nature. It will be remembered that in *Julius Cæsar* a great tempest and unnatural happenings preceded the assassination of Cæsar.

[20] COMBUSTION—Conflagration, fire. Probably used figuratively for tumult or disturbance.

[21] EVENTS NEW HATCH'D TO TH' WOEFUL TIME—Events born to, that is, in keeping with the woeful time.

[22] OBSCURE—Loving the darkness. The allusion is to the owl, which was regarded as a bird of ill omen.

Macbeth. 'T was a rough night.
Lennox. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow[23] to it.

Re-enter MACDUFF

Macduff. O horror, horror, horror! tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee!
Macbeth. } What's the matter?
Lennox. }
Macduff. Confusion[24] now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacrilegious[25] murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple,[26] and stole thence
The life o' the building.
Macbeth. What is 't you say? the life?
Lennox. Mean you his majesty?
Macduff. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon.[27] Do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves.
[*Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox*
Awake, awake!
Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The great doom's image[28]! Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,[29]
To countenance[30] this horror. Ring the bell. [*Bell rings*

---

[23] CANNOT PARALLEL A FELLOW—Cannot call up its equal.

[24] CONFUSION—Destruction.

[25] SACRILEGIOUS—Note the pronunciation of this word: săk rĭ lē'jŭs. Do not confuse the last three syllables with "religious."

[26] ANOINTED TEMPLE—See *I Samuel*, 24:10 where the king is referred to as "the Lord's anointed," and *II Corinthians*, 6:16 where the Christian is called "the temple of the living God."

[27] GORGON—The reference is to Medusa, a character in Greek mythology whose appearance was so terrible that whoever looked at her was turned to stone.

[28] GREAT DOOM'S IMAGE—A sight as terrible as the Great Judgment.

[29] SPRITES—Spirits. The figure of the Judgment Day is continued.

[30] COUNTENANCE—Be in keeping with.

Enter Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth. What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley[31]
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!
Macduff. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.

Enter Banquo

O Banquo, Banquo,
Our royal master's murder'd!
Lady Macbeth. Woe, alas!
What, in our house?
Banquo. Too cruel anywhere.
Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,
And say it is not so.

Re-enter Macbeth *and* Lennox, *with* Ross

Macbeth. Had I but died an hour before this chance,[32]
I had liv'd a blessed time; for, from this instant,
There's nothing serious in mortality[33]
All is but toys; renown and grace[34] is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees[35]
Is left this vault[36] to brag of.

Enter Malcolm *and* Donalbain

Donalbain. What is amiss?
Macbeth. You are, and do not know 't:

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[31] Parley—Conference.
[32] Chance—Unfortunate event.
[33] Mortality—Life.
[34] Grace—Good opinion, esteem.
[35] Lees—Dregs.
[36] Vault—Macbeth has in mind a vault or storage place for wine. By "this vault" he means, of course, himself.

The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd, the very source of it is stopp'd.
Macduff. Your royal father's murder'd.
Malcolm. O! by whom?
Lennox. Those of his chamber,[37] as it seem'd, had done 't:
Their hands and faces were all badg'd[38] with blood;
So were their daggers, which unwip'd we found
Upon their pillows:
They star'd, and were distracted; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.
Macbeth. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.
Macduff. Wherefore did you so?
Macbeth. Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
The expedition[39] of my violent love
Outrun the pauser, reason.[40] Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood;
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance; there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd[41] with gore: who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make 's[42] love known?
Lady Macbeth. Help me hence, ho!
Macduff. Look to the lady.
Malcolm. [*Aside to Donalbain*] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument[43] for ours?
Donalbain. [*Aside to Malcolm*] What should be spoken here, where our fate,

---

[37] THOSE OF HIS CHAMBER—The grooms.

[38] BADG'D—Marked as with a badge.

[39] EXPEDITION—Haste

[40] PAUSER, REASON—Reason which makes one stop (pause) to think before he acts.

[41] BREECH'D—Covered.

[42] MAKE 'S—Make his.

[43] ARGUMENT—Matter in hand, that is, the murder of Duncan, their father.

Hid in an auger-hole,[44] may rush, and seize us?
Let's away.
Our tears are not yet brew'd.
Malcolm. [*Aside to Donalbain*] Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.[45]
Banquo. Look to the lady;
[*Lady Macbeth is carried out*
And when we have our naked frailties[46] hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet
And question this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us:
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulg'd pretence[47] I fight
Of treasonous malice.
Macduff. And so do I.
All. So all.
Macbeth. Let's briefly[48] put on manly readiness,[49]
And meet i' the hall together.
All. Well contented.[50]
[*Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain*
Malcolm. What will you do? Let's not consort with them:
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office[51]
Which the false man does easy.[52] I'll to England.
Donalbain. To Ireland I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer: where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,

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[44] HID IN AN AUGER-HOLE—Where no place is so small, not even an auger-hole, but that our fate may lurk therein.

[45] NOR OUR STRONG SORROW UPON THE FOOT OF MOTION—Donalbain has just said "Our tears are not yet brew'd" and Malcolm continues with a remark which means: And our great grief has not yet been given expression. The emotion of fear, for the time, supplants that of grief.

[46] NAKED FRAILTIES—Banquo and the others have rushed forth half-dressed

[47] UNDIVULG'D PRETENCE—The not-yet-known design or purpose. Banquo means that he stands ready to fight against whatever treasonable purpose is to be found behind the murder.

[48] BRIEFLY—Quickly.

[49] MANLY READINESS—Armor. The implication is that being armed they will feel more ready to act like men.

[50] WELL CONTENTED—Agreed.

[51] OFFICE—Action, "duty."

[52] EASY—Easily.

The nearer bloody.[53]
Malcolm. This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted; and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim.[54] Therefore, to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away:[55] there's warrant[56] in that theft
Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left. [*Exeunt*

---

[53] THE NEAR IN BLOOD, THE NEARER BLOODY—The meaning is that being sons of Duncan, the nearer in blood or relationship, the nearer they are to death.

[54] THE MURDEROUS SHAFT . . . AVOID THE AIM—Whoever killed our father is not yet done, for we stand yet between the murderer and the throne. We must away to avoid being struck by the same arrow.

[55] SHIFT AWAY—Steal away.

[56] WARRANT—Justification. The meaning is that there can be no blame or discourtesy in stealing away without taking leave from a place where they can expect no mercy.

SCENE 4

Outside MACBETH'S *castle*

Enter ROSS *and an* OLD MAN

Old Man. Threescore-and-ten I can remember well:
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange; but this sore night
Hath trifl'd former knowings.[1]
Ross. Ah, good father,[2]
Thou see'st the heavens, as troubl'd with man's act,
Threatens his[3] bloody stage;[4] by th' clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.[5]

---

[1] HATH TRIFL'D FORMER KNOWINGS—Had made former experiences seem trifling.

[2] GOOD FATHER—An expression commonly used in addressing old men.

[3] HIS—Its.

[4] BLOODY STAGE—The earth. The figure is from the theatre, the meaning being: The heavens displeased at man's act threatens to destroy the bloody stage altogether.

[5] TRAVELLING LAMP—Sun. Holinshed says: "For the space of six monethes togither, after this heinous murther was committed, there appeered no sunne by day, nor moone by night in anie part of the realme."

Is 't night's predominance, or the day's shame
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?
Old Man 'Tis unnatural,[6]
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, tow'ring[7] in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing[8] owl hawk'd at and kill'd.
Ross. And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain—
Beauteous and swift, the minions[9] of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.
Old Man. 'Tis said they eat[10] each other.
Ross. They did so, to th' amazement of mine eyes,
That look'd upon 't.

Enter MACDUFF

Here comes the good Macduff.
How goes the world, sir, now?
Macduff. Why, see you not?
Ross. Is 't known who did this more than bloody deed?
Macduff. Those that Macbeth hath slain.
Ross. Alas, the day!
What good could they pretend?[11]

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[6] UNNATURAL—Monstrous, abnormal, not according to nature. Holinshed says: "Monstrous sights also that were seene within the Scotish Kingdome that year. . . . There was a sparhawke also strangled by an owle."

[7] TOW'RING—Soaring. The term was used to designate the soaring of the falcon to the "place" from which it swooped down upon its prey.

[8] MOUSING—An owl which was accustomed to attack nothing more vicious than mere mice.

[9] MINIONS—Most favored, best cared for.

[10] EAT—The past tense of eat, commonly pronounced ĕt in British usage, where we should say āte. Among the "monstrous sights" related by Holinshed was the following: "Horsses in Louthian, being of singular beautie and swiftnesse, did eate their owne fleshe."

[11] PRETEND—Expect to derive from the deed.

Macduff. They were suborn'd.[12]
Malcolm and Donalbain, the King's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled; which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.
Ross. 'Gainst nature still![13]
Thriftless ambition, that will ravin up[14]
Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.
Macduff. He is already nam'd; and gone to Scone[15]
To be invested.
Ross. Where is Duncan's body?
Macduff. Carried to Colmekill,[16]
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.
Ross. Will you to Scone?
Macduff. No, cousin, I'll to Fife.[17]
Ross. Well, I will thither.[18]
Macduff. Well, may you see things well done there,—adieu!—
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new![19]
Ross. Farewell, father.
Old Man. God's benison[20] go with you; and with those
That would make good of bad, and friends of foes! [*Exeunt*

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[12] SUBORN'D—Bribed.

[13] STILL—Always.

[14] RAVIN UP—Devour utterly.

[15] SCONE (skoon)—The ancient royal city of Scotland and place of coronation of the Scottish kings. Legend has it that the "stone of Scone" upon which kings sat to be crowned was the very stone on which Jacob slept. Edward I caused the stone to be carried to Westminster in 1296, where it now rests beneath the coronation chair.

[16] COLMEKILL—St. Colum's or St. Columba's cell. The island of Iona, where the tombs of the ancient kings may still be seen. Holinshed says, "He . . . foorth with went unto Scone where . . . he received the investure of the Kingdome. . . . The bodie of Duncan was . . . removed and conveied unto Colmekill, and there laid in a sepulture amongst his predecessors."

[17] FIFE—Macduff was Thane of Fife.

[18] THITHER—To Scone.

[19] LEST OUR OLD ROBES SIT EASIER THAN OUR NEW—Lest the new order of things be worse than the old.

[20] BENISON—Blessing.

ACT III

SCENE I

Forres. The palace

Enter BANQUO

Banquo. Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promis'd, and, I fear,
Thou play'dst most foully for 't: yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,[1]
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them,
As[2] upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine,[3]
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles[4] as well,
And set me up in hope? But hush! no more.

Sennet sounded. Enter MACBETH, *as king;* LADY MACBETH, *as queen;* LENNOX, ROSS, Lords, Ladies, *and* Attendants

Macbeth. Here's our chief guest.
Lady Macbeth. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all-thing[5] unbecoming.
Macbeth. To-night we hold a solemn[6] supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.
Banquo. Let your highness
Command upon me[7]; to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

---

[1] IT SHOULD NOT STAND IN THY POSTERITY—See the prophecy of the third witch, Act I, Scene 3.
[2] AS—Since, inasmuch as.
[3] THEIR SPEECHES SHINE—The truth of their prophecies shows with splendor.
[4] MY ORACLES—Prophets of the truth.
[5] ALL-THING—Altogether.
[6] SOLEMN—Formal.
[7] COMMAND UPON ME—Lay your command upon me.

Macbeth. Ride you this afternoon?
Banquo. Ay, my good lord.
Macbeth. We should have else desir'd your good advice,
Which still[8] hath been both grave and prosperous,[9]
In this day's council; but we'll take to-morrow[10]
Is 't far you ride?
Banquo. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt this and supper: go not my horse the better,[11]
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.
Macbeth. Fail not our feast.
Banquo. My lord, I will not.
Macbeth. We hear, our bloody cousins[12] are bestow'd[13]
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel parricide,[14] filling their hearers
With strange invention:[15] but of that to-morrow,
When therewithal[16] we shall have cause of state
Craving us jointly.[17] Hie you to horse; adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?
Banquo. Ay, my good lord: our time does call upon 's.[18]
Macbeth. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot;
And so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell. [*Exit Banquo*
Let every man be master of his time[19]
Till seven at night; to make society
The sweeter welcome,[20] we will keep ourself

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[8] STILL—Always.

[9] GRAVE AND PROSPEROUS—Worth paying attention to and invariably turning out well.

[10] WE'LL TAKE TO-MORROW—We'll let the matter go until to-morrow.

[11] GO NOT MY HORSE THE BETTER—If my horse go not better than usual.

[12] BLOODY COUSINS—Donalbain and Malcolm.

[13] BESTOW'D—Lodged.

[14] PARRICIDE—Murder of a parent.

[15] INVENTION—Falsehood.

[16] THEREWITHAL—In addition to the matter of what shall be done about Donalbain and Malcolm.

[17] CAUSE OF STATE CRAVING US JOINTLY—Affairs of state which demand our joint attention.

[18] UPON 'S—Upon us. That is, it is already the time we agreed upon to ride out.

[19] BE MASTER OF HIS TIME—Do as he wishes.

[20] SWEETER WELCOME—The more welcome.

Till supper-time alone: while[21] then, God be with you![22]
Sirrah,[23] a word with you: attend[24] those men[25]
Our pleasure?
Attendant. They are, my lord, without the palace-gate.
Macbeth. Bring them before us. [*Exit Attendant*
To be thus[26] is nothing,
But to be safely thus.[27] Our fears in Banquo.[28]
Stick deep; and in his royalty[29] of nature
Reigns that which would[30] be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares;
And, to[31] that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear; and, under him,
My Genius is rebuk'd, as, it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar.[32] He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then prophet-like
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal[33] hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,

---

[21] WHILE—Until.

[22] GOD BE WITH YOU—This is the full form of the common expression, "Good-by." It expresses the same thought contained in the French *adieu* (to God) and the Spanish *adios*.

[23] SIRRAH—A form commonly used in addressing a servant or an inferior.

[24] ATTEND—Wait.

[25] THOSE MEN—The murderers who soon come upon the scene.

[26] TO BE THUS—To be king.

[27] BUT TO BE SAFELY THUS—Unless I can be secure in my position.

[28] IN BANQUO—On account of Banquo. [29] ROYALTY—Nobility.

[30] WOULD—Should. [31] TO—In addition to.

[32] MY GENIUS IS REBUK'D, AS, IT IS SAID, MARK ANTONY'S WAS BY CÆSAR —The allusion is to a passage in North's *Plutarch* in *The Life of Marcus Antonius*. It is related that Antonius was once told by a soothsayer that his fortune was inferior to Octavius Cæsar's. "For thy demon," said the soothsayer (that is to say, the good angel and spirit that keepeth thee) "is afraid of his: and, being courageous and high where he [Antony's good angel] is alone, becometh the fearful and timorous when he cometh near the other."

[33] UNLINEAL HAND—By one not descended from me. The following line makes the meaning clear.

For Banquo's issue have I fil'd[34] my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
Put rancours[35] in the vessel[36] of my peace
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel[37]
Given to the common enemy[38] of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo, kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to th' utterance![39]—Who's there?

Re-enter Attendant, *with two* MURDERERS

Now go to th' door, and stay there till we call.—
[*Exit Attendant*
Was it not yesterday we spoke together?
1 Murderer. It was, so please your highness.
Macbeth. Well then, now
Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know
That it was he,[40] in the times past, which held you
So under fortune;[41] which you thought had been
Our innocent self: this I made good to you
In our last conference, pass'd in probation with you,[42]
How you were borne in hand,[43] how cross'd,[44] the instruments,[45]
Who wrought with them, and all things else[46] that might
To half a soul and to a notion[47] craz'd
Say, 'Thus did Banquo.'
1 Murderer. You made it known to us.

---

[34] FIL'D—Defiled.
[35] RANCOURS—Bitterness. [36] VESSEL—Cup.
[37] MINE ETERNAL JEWEL—My immortal soul [38] COMMON ENEMY—Satan.
[39] CHAMPION ME TO TH' UTTERANCE—Fight against me to the death.
[40] HE—Banquo.
[41] HELD YOU SO UNDER FORTUNE—Kept you from being rewarded according to your merits. Macbeth has chosen to do the murder two disgruntled soldiers whom he incites against Banquo by telling them that their misfortunes are the result of Banquo's injustice.
[42] PASS'D IN PROBATION WITH YOU—Went over point by point with you, giving you proof in each instance.
[43] BORNE IN HAND—Deluded with false hopes or promises.
[44] CROSS'D—Thwarted. [45] INSTRUMENTS—Agents.
[46] AND ALL THINGS ELSE—And proved to you all things else.
[47] NOTION—Mind, understanding.

Macbeth. I did so, and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature
That you can let this go? Are you so gospell'd,[48]
To pray for this good man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave
And beggar'd[49] yours for ever?
1 Murderer. We are men, my liege.
Macbeth. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs,[50] water-rugs,[50] and demi-wolves,[50] are clept[51]
All by the name of dogs: the valued file[52]
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,[53]
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him clos'd; whereby he does receive
Particular addition,[54] from the bill[55]
That writes them all alike; and so of men.[56]
Now, if you have a station in the file,[57]
Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say 't;
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution[58] takes your enemy off,
Grapples you[59] to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,[60]

---

[48] GOSPELL'D—So filled with the lesson of the gospel which says, "Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." See *Matthew* 5:44.

[49] BEGGAR'D—Made beggars.

[50] SHOUGHS—A shaggy-haired kind of dog. WATER-RUGS—A water dog. DEMI-WOLVES—Dogs which are half-wolf. [51] CLEPT—Called.

[52] VALUED FILE—The list which sets down the values of each dog. This expression is used in contrast to "catalogue" in the first line of the speech.

[53] SUBTLE—Cunning.

[54] PARTICULAR ADDITION—His own distinctive attribute; his rank.

[55] BILL—The catalogue or general list.

[56] AND SO OF MEN—And it is likewise with men.

[57] STATION IN THE FILE—If you have that which distinguishes you from the common run of men.

[58] WHOSE EXECUTION—The execution of which. "Whose" refers to business.

[59] GRAPPLES YOU—Fastens you to.

[60] WEAR OUR HEALTH BUT SICKLY IN HIS LIFE—Find our well-being impaired or in danger while he is alive.

Which in his death were perfect.
2 Murderer. I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Hath so incens'd, that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.
1 Murderer. And I another
So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,[61]
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it, or be rid on 't.
Macbeth. Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.
Both Murderers. True, my lord.
Macbeth. So is he mine; and in such bloody distance,[62]
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life; and though I could
With barefac'd power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch it,[63] yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail[64] his fall
Who I myself struck down; and thence it is,
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye
For[65] sundry weighty reasons.
2 Murderer. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.
1 Murderer. Though our lives[66]—
Macbeth. Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most

---

[61] TUGG'D WITH FORTUNE—Buffeted about by fortune.

[62] BLOODY DISTANCE—The figure is from duelling. Macbeth speaks of Banquo as one who stands within duelling distance—that is, so close that he (Banquo) can with a single thrust at any minute pierce Macbeth's "near'st of life" (vitals).

[63] AVOUCH IT—Give no explanation to the kingdom other than that it is my will or desire.

[64] BUT WAIL—Instead of sweeping Banquo from my sight myself, I must bewail (publicly) his murder.

[65] FOR—On account of.

[66] THOUGH OUR LIVES—Though our lives answer for it.

I will advise you where to plant yourselves;
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,[67]
The moment on 't; for 't must be done to-night,
And something from[68] the palace; always thought[69]
That I require a clearness: and with him—
To leave no rubs nor botches[70] in the work—
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart;
I'll come to you anon.

Both Murderers. We are resolv'd,[71] my lord.

Macbeth. I'll call upon you straight: abide within.

[*Exeunt Murderers*

It is concluded:[72] Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night. [*Exit*

---

[67] ACQUAINT YOU WITH THE PERFECT SPY O' THE TIME—This probably means: Let you know by means of a perfect spy (the third murderer) when to strike.

[68] SOMETHING FROM—At some distance.

[69] ALWAYS THOUGHT—It being always remembered that I must be kept clear of suspicion.

[70] TO LEAVE NO RUBS NOR BOTCHES—To leave no rough spots, or flaws, and botches such as betray poor workmanship. The expression is parenthetical.

[71] WE ARE RESOLV'D—We have made up our minds.

[72] IT IS CONCLUDED—The matter is settled.

SCENE 2

The palace

Enter LADY MACBETH *and a* SERVANT

Lady Macbeth. Is Banquo gone from court?

Servant. Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Say to the king, I would attend his leisure[1]
For a few words.

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[1] ATTEND HIS LEISURE—Wait until he is at leisure, or at liberty.

Servant. Madam, I will.
Lady Macbeth. Nought's had, all's spent,[2]
Where our desire is got without content.[3]
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter MACBETH

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making;
Using[4] those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard:[5] what's done is done.
Macbeth. We have scotch'd[6] the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll close and be herself,[7] whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things[8] disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie[9]
In restless ecstasy.[10] Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,

---

[2] NOUGHT'S HAD, ALL'S SPENT—Nothing is gained, everything is thrown away, or lost.

[3] CONTENT—Happiness, peace of mind.

[4] USING—Cherishing.

[5] THINGS WITHOUT ALL REMEDY SHOULD BE WITHOUT REGARD—What cannot be remedied should be ignored.

[6] SCOTCH'D—Cut, slashed.

[7] SHE'LL CLOSE AND BE HERSELF—Grow together again and be as formerly.

[8] THE FRAME OF THINGS—The universe. The meaning of the lines is: Let the universe fall apart and heaven and earth perish before we will eat our meal in fear, etc.

[9] ON THE TORTURE OF THE MIND TO LIE—The figure alludes to the rack, an instrument of torture employed in the Middle Ages.

[10] ECSTASY—Frenzy.

Malice domestic,[11] foreign levy,[12] nothing,
Can touch him further.
Lady Macbeth. Come on;
Gentle my lord,[13] sleek o'er [14] your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.
Macbeth. So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you.
Let your remembrance apply to [15] Banquo;
Present him eminence,[16] both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,[17]
And make our faces vizards [18] to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.
Lady Macbeth. You must leave this.
Macbeth. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo and his Fleance lives.
Lady Macbeth. But in them nature's copy 's not eterne.[19]
Macbeth. There's comfort yet; they are assailable; [20]
Then be thou jocund: ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; [21] ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne [22] beetle with his drowsy hums

---

[11] MALICE DOMESTIC—Rebellion, such as that raised by Macdonwald. See Act I, Scene 2.

[12] FOREIGN LEVY—War from without, such as the attack of Norway. See Act I, Scene 2.

[13] GENTLE MY LORD—My gentle lord. [14] SLEEK O'ER—Smooth.

[15] REMEMBRANCE APPLY TO—Remember to be gracious to him.

[16] PRESENT HIM EMINENCE—Treat him as eminent, make much of him.

[17] LAVE OUR HONOURS IN THESE FLATTERING STREAMS—Wash, for the purpose of keeping unsoiled, our honors in these streams of flattery. The meaning is: We are not safe so long as we are dependent upon the support which can be gained only through flattery.

[18] VIZARDS—Masks.

[19] NATURE'S COPY 'S NOT ETERNE—They will not live forever. The allusion in the figure is to a form of land tenure known as "copyhold." Copyhold did not give perpetual title to the holder.

[20] ASSAILABLE—They may be destroyed. Macbeth interprets Lady Macbeth's remark in a way she probably did not intend it—that Banquo and Fleance can be murdered if necessary.

[21] BAT HATH FLOWN HIS CLOISTER'D FLIGHT—Has flown about the cloisters where perhaps he has hung all day.

[22] SHARD-BORNE—Borne through the air on its hard, scaly wings which are like broken pieces, or shards, of pottery. The word "shard" is now used to describe the beetle's wing cover.

Hath rung night's yawning[23] peal,[24] there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.
Lady Macbeth. What's to be done?
Macbeth. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,[25]
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,[26]
Scarf up[27] the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond[28]
Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to th' rooky[29] wood:
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvell'st at my words, but hold thee still;
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So, prithee, go with me. [*Exeunt*

---

[23] YAWNING—Drowsy, slumbrous.

[24] RUNG NIGHT'S YAWNING PEAL—The curfew. Compare with the opening lines of Gray's *Elegy* in *PROSE AND POETRY, Tenth Year.*

[25] CHUCK—Also chick, a term of endearment.

[26] SEELING NIGHT—A technical term from falconry, designating a method of closing the eyes of a hawk. Here "seeling night" means night which closes the eyes.

[27] SCARF UP—Blindfold.

[28] THAT GREAT BOND—The prophecy of the third witch. The allusion is probably to the "bond of destiny" which guarantees to Banquo's heirs succession to the throne.

[29] ROOKY—Rook-haunted. "Rook" here probably is used as a synonym for crow.

SCENE 3

A park near the palace

Enter three MURDERERS

1 Murderer. But who did bid thee join with us?
3 Murderer. Macbeth.
2 Murderer. He[1] needs not our mistrust;[2] since he delivers

---

[1] HE—The Third Murderer.

[2] NEEDS NOT OUR MISTRUST—We need not mistrust him.

Our offices, and what we have to do,
To the direction just.[3]
1 Murderer. Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
Now spurs the lated traveller apace
To gain the timely inn; [4] and near approaches
The subject of our watch.
3 Murderer. Hark! I hear horses.
Banquo. [*Within*] Give us a light there, ho!
2 Murderer. Then 'tis he: the rest
That are within the note of expectation
Already are i' the court.[5]
1 Murderer. His horses go about.
3 Murderer. Almost a mile: [6] but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to th' palace gate
Make it their walk.

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *with a torch*

2 Murderer. A light, a light!
3 Murderer. 'Tis he.
1 Murderer. Stand to 't.[7]
Banquo. It will be rain to-night.
1 Murderer. Let it come down.[8]
[*They set upon Banquo*
Banquo. O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou mayst revenge. O slave! [*Dies. Fleance escapes*

---

[3] DELIVERS OUR OFFICES, AND WHAT WE HAVE TO DO TO THE DIRECTION JUST—Tells us exactly what we are to do even as we heard it from Macbeth.

[4] TO GAIN THE TIMELY INN—To reach the inn in good time, that is, before dark.

[5] THEN 'TIS HE: THE REST . . . ALREADY ARE I' THE COURT—It is Banquo, since all others who are expected are already within the court of the castle.

[6] HIS HORSES GO ABOUT: ALMOST A MILE—Banquo's servants lead the horses along the road which evidently approaches the castle by a circuitous path. Banquo and Fleance dismount and approach the castle by a footpath which makes a short-cut.

[7] STAND TO 'T—Get ready. The remark is directed to the other murderers. It was the part of the First Murderer to strike down Banquo's light, and his remark means: Make ready, I am going to strike down the light.

[8] LET IT COME DOWN—The blow. Here is a play on words.

3 Murderer. Who did strike out the light?
1 Murderer. Was 't not the way?
3 Murderer. There's but one down; the son is fled.
2 Murderer. We have lost
Best half of our affair.
1 Murderer. Well, let's away, and say how much is done.
[*Exeunt*

SCENE 4

Hall in the palace

A banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, LORDS, *and* Attendants

Macbeth. You know your own degrees;[1] sit down: at first
And last the hearty welcome.
Lords. Thanks to your majesty.
Macbeth. Ourself will mingle with society,
And play the humble host.
Our hostess keeps her state,[2] but in best time
We will require her welcome.[3]
Lady Macbeth. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends,
For my heart speaks they are welcome.
[*First Murderer appears at the door*
Macbeth. See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.[4]
Both sides are even:[5] here I'll sit i' the midst.
Be large[6] in mirth; anon[7] we'll drink a measure

---

[1] DEGREES—Degrees of rank. It being a state, or formal, banquet, the the guests would sit according to rank.

[2] HOSTESS KEEPS HER STATE—Lady Macbeth sits in her chair of state on a dais at the upper end of the hall, while Macbeth "mingles with" his guests—that is, sits at table with them. He has not yet sat down, but lingers near the door, expecting the Murderer.

[3] REQUIRE HER WELCOME—Ask her to give you welcome.

[4] SEE, THEY ENCOUNTER THEE WITH THEIR HEARTS' THANKS—This is addressed to Lady Macbeth, and refers to the manifestations of thanks returned by the guests.

[5] BOTH SIDES ARE EVEN—The chair reserved for Banquo, and which Macbeth chooses was evidently at mid-table.

[6] LARGE—Unrestrained. [7] ANON—Soon.

The table round.—[*Goes to the door*] There's blood upon thy face.
Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then.
Macbeth. 'Tis better thee without than he within.[8]
Is he dispatch'd?[9]
Murderer. My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.
Macbeth. Thou art the best o' the cut-throats: yet he's good
That did the like for Fleance: if thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.[10]
Murderer. Most royal sir,
Fleance is scap'd.
Macbeth. Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect,
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock;
As broad and general as the casing air:[11]
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd,[12] confin'd, bound in
To[13] saucy[14] doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe?
Murderer. Ay, my good lord; safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenched[15] gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.[16]
Macbeth. Thanks for that.
There the grown serpent lies; the worm[17] that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for th' present. Get thee gone: to-morrow
We'll hear ourselves[18] again. [*Exit Murderer*
Lady Macbeth. My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,

---

[8] 'TIS BETTER THEE WITHOUT THAN HE WITHIN—It is better on your face than in his veins.

[9] DISPATCH'D—Done away with, killed.

[10] NONPAREIL—One without an equal.

[11] AS BROAD AND GENERAL AS THE CASING AIR—As unrestrained and unconfined as the air which envelops the earth but is itself boundless.

[12] CABIN'D, CRIBB'D—Shut up, hampered.

[13] BOUND IN TO—Bound in by.

[14] SAUCY—Importunate.

[15] TRENCHED—Deep-cut.

[16] THE LEAST A DEATH TO NATURE—The least of which would be fatal.

[17] WORM—The young serpent—Fleance.

[18] HEAR OURSELVES—Hear one another.

'Tis given with welcome:[19] to feed were best at home;
From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.[20]

Enter the Ghost *of* Banquo, *and sits in* Macbeth's *place*

Macbeth. Sweet remembrancer![21]
Now, good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!
Lennox. May 't please your highness sit.
Macbeth. Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,[22]
Were the grac'd person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance.[23]
Ross. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise.[24] Please 't your highness
To grace us with your royal company.
Macbeth. The table's full!
Lennox. Here[25] is a place reserv'd, sir.
Macbeth. Where?
Lennox. Here, my good lord. What is 't that moves your highness?

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[19] The feast is sold . . . 'tis given with welcome—The meaning is: The feast which is not often vouched (proclaimed by the host as a thing he does out of pleasure) is like a meal which one buys, where there is no sentiment connected with the eating at all. While the feast is on (a-making), the host must make it clear that his guests are welcome. If the purpose of a banquet is merely to eat, then according to Lady Macbeth, it were best to eat at home.

[20] From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony; meeting were bare without it—That which makes eating away from home enjoyable is the ceremony, or attention paid to one. Mere meeting and eating together without the ceremony is no delight.

[21] Remembrancer—One who reminds another.

[22] Our country's honour roof'd—All the worthy men of our country under one roof. The meaning of the lines is: Here we should have our country's honor roof'd if only the gracious person of our Banquo were present.

[23] Who may I rather challenge for unkindness than pity for mischance—Whose absence is due, I hope, to unkindness rather than to mischance or accident.

[24] Lays blame upon his promise—Makes him guilty of an unkindness, since he promised to be present.

[25] Here—The place reserved for Banquo.

Macbeth. Which of you have done this?
Lords. What, my good lord?
Macbeth. Thou[26] canst not say I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me.
Ross. Gentlemen, rise; his highness is not well.
Lady Macbeth. Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;
The fit is momentary; upon a thought[27]
He will again be well: if much you note him,[28]
You will offend him, and extend his passion:[29]
Feed, and regard him not. [*Aside to Macbeth*][30] Are you a man?
Macbeth. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.
Lady Macbeth. [*Aside to Macbeth*] O proper stuff![31]
This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws[32] and starts,[33]
Impostors to[34] true fear, would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authoriz'd by her grandam.[35] Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.
Macbeth. Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo! how say you?
Why, what care I?[36] If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel-houses[37] and our graves must send

---

[26] THOU—This speech is addressed to the ghost of Banquo.

[27] UPON A THOUGHT—In a moment.

[28] MUCH NOTE HIM—Pay much heed to him.

[29] EXTEND HIS PASSION—Prolong the agitation.

[30] *Aside to Macbeth*—Lady Macbeth has left her seat and come down to Macbeth.

[31] O PROPER STUFF—Nonsense!

[32] FLAWS—A sudden squall of wind, hence in this case, an outburst of feeling or "nerves."

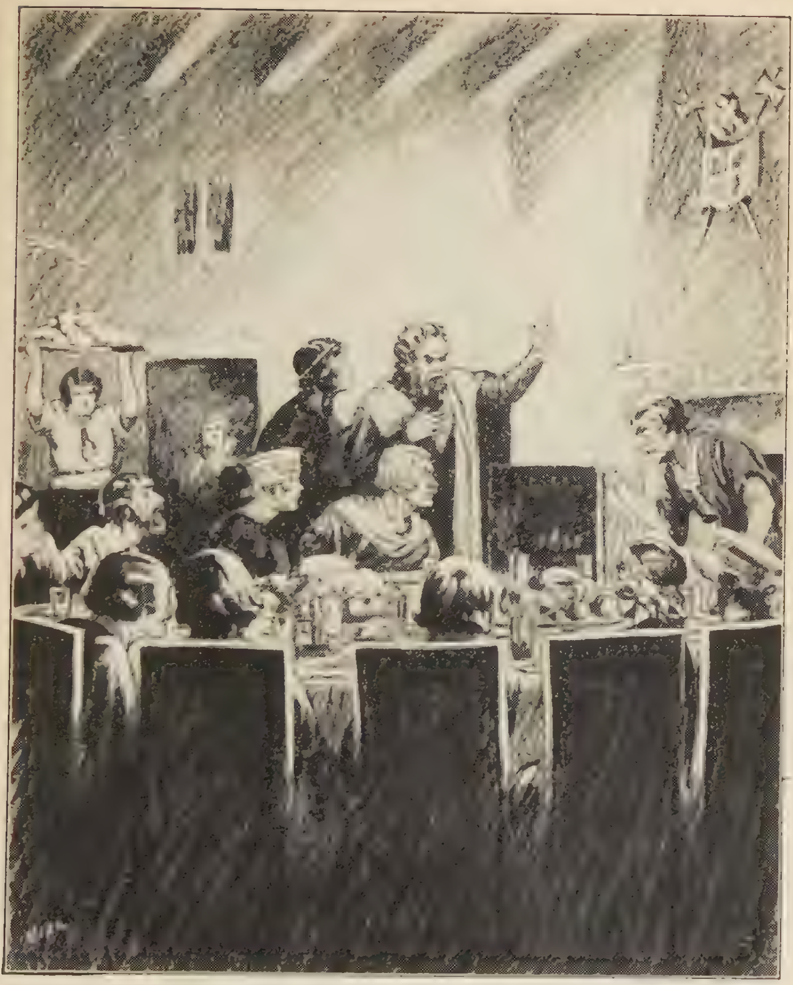
[33] STARTS—Alarms. Compare with our word "startle."

[34] IMPOSTORS TO—Mere allusions when compared to.

[35] AUTHORIZ'D BY HER GRANDAM—Vouched for, or given on the authority of her grandmother. The meaning is: "Your fear is no more real than that raised by some tale told at the fireside by a woman who heard it from her grandmother.

[36] WHY, WHAT CARE I—This and the following three lines are addressed to the ghost.

[37] CHARNEL-HOUSES—Sepulchers.



Macbeth. Thou canst not say I did it; never shake
Thy gory locks at me.

Act III; *Scene* 4.

Those that we bury back, our monuments[38]
Shall be the maws[39] of kites. [Ghost *vanishes*
Lady Macbeth. [*Aside to Macbeth*] What, quite unmann'd in folly?
Macbeth. If I stand here, I saw him!
Lady Macbeth. [*Aside to Macbeth*] Fie, for shame!
Macbeth. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,
Ere humane statute purg'd the gentle weal;[40]
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear. The time has been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders[41] on their crowns,
And push us from our stools: this is more strange
Than such a murder is.
Lady Macbeth. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack[42] you.
Macbeth. I do forget.
Do not muse[43] at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.

Re-enter the Ghost

I drink to th' general joy o' the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! to all and him we thirst,
And all to all.[44]

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[38] MONUMENTS—Tombs.

[39] MAWS—Stomachs. The meaning is: If the dead may return from ordinary graves, it were better to be left unburied to be devoured by the kites.

[40] ERE HUMANE STATUTE PURG'D THE GENTLE WEAL—Before humane laws protecting human life made the commonwealth gentle. Macbeth refers to days before stable government protected life.

[41] WITH TWENTY MORTAL MURDERS—The allusion is to Banquo whom the murderer described as "safe in a ditch . . . with twenty trenched gashes in his head, the least a death to nature."

[42] LACK—Miss, or perceive your absence.

[43] MUSE—Wonder.

[44] ALL TO ALL—Let each drink to all others—a general toast.

Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

Macbeth. Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation[45] in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with!

Lady Macbeth. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

Macbeth. What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd[46] rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan[47] tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit then,[48] protest[49] me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence! [*Ghost vanishes*
Why, so: being gone,
I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.[50]

Lady Macbeth. You have displac'd the mirth, broke the good meeting,
With most admir'd[51] disorder.

Macbeth. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?[52] You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,[53]

---

[45] Speculation—Power of sight.

[46] Arm'd—Armored with his thick skin and tusks.

[47] Hyrcan—Hyrcanian. Hyrcania, a region south of the Caspian Sea, mentioned in Pliny's *Natural History* as the home of the tiger.

[48] If trembling I inhabit then—If trembling with fear I then stay in my castle.

[49] Protest—Declare, call.

[50] Sit still—What were Macbeth's guests doing?

[51] Admir'd—Strange.

[52] And overcome us like a summer's cloud, without our special wonder—Pass over us like a summer's cloud to which we pay no attention.

[53] You make me strange even to the disposition that I owe—Macbeth has always possessed (owed) a brave and undaunted spirit (disposition). He says in effect to Lady Macbeth who shows no signs of fear, not having seen the ghost, "Your fearlessness makes me hardly know myself, so that I wonder if I am he who has never been afraid of anything."

When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.
Ross. What sights, my lord?
Lady Macbeth. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;
Question enrages[54] him. At once, good-night:
Stand not upon the order of your going,[55]
But go at once.
Lennox. Good-night; and better health
Attend his majesty!
Lady Macbeth. A kind good-night to all!
[*Exeunt all but Macbeth and Lady Macbeth*
Macbeth. It will have blood;[56] they say blood will have blood:
Stones have been known to move and trees to speak;[57]
Augures[58] and understood relations[59] have
By magot-pies[60] and choughs[61] and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.[62] What is the night?

---

[54] QUESTION ENRAGES—Questions enrage.

[55] STAND NOT UPON THE ORDER OF YOUR GOING—This being a formal, or state, banquet, the guests were seated according to rank. Lady Macbeth, wishing to have the guests depart as quickly as possible before Macbeth says that which will betray him, calls out to them to depart without regard to rank or precedence.

[56] IT WILL HAVE BLOOD—"It" refers to the murder rather than to the ghost. The sense is that the deed cries for vengeance.

[57] THEY SAY BLOOD WILL HAVE BLOOD: STONES HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO MOVE AND TREES TO SPEAK—The saying that "murder will out" is a very old one. Old wives' tales of astonishing and supernatural means by which murders came to light, when the murderer thought himself safe, were common enough in Shakespeare's day. The allusions here are no doubt to stories of this kind—the one to the story that stones refused to stay over the body of a murdered man, and the other possibly to the murder of Polydorus related in Virgil, where the trees are said to have informed on the murderer.

[58] AUGURES—Divinations.

[59] UNDERSTOOD RELATIONS—Relationships revealed by those who understand how to trace them.

[60] MAGOT-PIES—Magpies. [61] CHOUGHS—Jackdaws.

[62] THE SECRET'ST MAN OF BLOOD—The murderer who supposed his secret unknown to any but himself. The sense of the whole passage is that the most carefully covered murders have been disclosed by divinations made upon magpies, etc., by those who have understood how to trace the relationship between the bird examined and the murder. Consult an encyclopedia under *Divining*.

Lady Macbeth. Almost at odds with[63] morning, which is
which.

Macbeth. How say'st thou,[64] that Macduff denies his person[65]
At our great bidding?

Lady Macbeth. Did you send to him, sir?

Macbeth. I hear it by the way,[66] but I will send:
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd.[67] I will to-morrow,
And betimes I will, to the weird sisters:
More shall they speak; for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good
All causes[68] shall give way: I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er:
Strange things I have in head that will to hand,[69]
Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd.[70]

Lady Macbeth. You lack the season[71] of all natures, sleep.

Macbeth. Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse[72]
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use:[73]
We are yet but young in deed. [*Exeunt*

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[63] AT ODDS WITH—Contesting.

[64] HOW SAY'ST THOU—What do you say to the fact that.

[65] DENIES HIS PERSON—Denies his person—Macduff refused to attend the banquet.

[66] I HEAR IT BY THE WAY—I hear it indirectly.

[67] I KEEP A SERVANT FEE'D—Macbeth pays a servant in each of the houses of his great subjects to report to him what may be said there about him. He had not received any refusal from Macduff; he had heard through a spy in Macduff's castle what the attitude of the latter was toward him.

[68] ALL CAUSES—Every other consideration.

[69] WILL TO HAND—Press to be done.

[70] SCANN'D—Examined carefully. The implication is that the things Macbeth had in mind doing are of such dreadful nature that it were best to do them first, for thinking about them too much would cause him to refrain.

[71] SEASON—Preservation—that which keeps things fresh and wholesome.

[72] SELF-ABUSE—Self-delusion.

[73] IS THE INITIATE FEAR THAT WANTS HARD USE—The sense is as follows: Macbeth says that his self-delusion is but the result of the fear which the beginner (initiate fear) naturally has, and that it will disappear with hard use—that is, when he has become hardened and accustomed to killing.

SCENE 5

A heath

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES, *meeting* HECATE[1]

1 Witch. Why, how now, Hecate! you look angerly.
Hecate. Have I not reason, beldams[2] as you are,
Saucy[3] and overbold? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles[4] and affairs of death;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close[5] contriver of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,
Spiteful and wrathful; who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.
But make amends now: get you gone,
And at the pit of Acheron[6]
Meet me i' the morning: thither he
Will come to know his destiny:
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms, and every thing beside.
I am for th' air; this night I'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end:
Great business must be wrought ere noon:
Upon the corner of the moon

---

[1] HECATE—The modern pronunciation is hĕk'ā-tē. Shakespeare employs it as a word of two syllables, possibly hĕk'āte. In Greek mythology, Hecate was queen of Hades, or the underworld.

[2] BELDAMS—Hags. [3] SAUCY—Insolent.

[4] RIDDLES—In prophecies which have a double or equivocal meaning.

[5] CLOSE—Secret.

[6] ACHERON—Acheron was the name of a river in Hades. Here "the pit of Acheron" is used to designate the entrance to the infernal regions, or "hell-mouth."

There hangs a vaporous drop[7] profound;[8]
I'll catch it ere it come to ground:
And that distill'd by magic sleights
Shall raise such artificial sprites[9]
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his confusion:
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear;
And you all know security[10]
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.
[*Music, and a Song*
Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [*Exit*
[*Sing within:*[11] 'Come away, come away,' etc.]

1 Witch. Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be back again.
[*Exeunt*

---

[7] VAPOROUS DROP—There was a belief among the ancients in "a foam (*virus lunare*, i.e., poison or potent liquid of the moon) which the moon was supposed to shed on particular herbs or other objects, when strongly solicited by enchantment."

[8] PROFOUND—Full of magic qualities.

[9] SPRITES—Spirits.

[10] SECURITY—Over-confidence.

[11] *Sing within*—The song referred to comes from another Elizabethan play, *The Witch,* written by Thomas Middleton. Scholars believe that this whole scene is by some author other than Shakespeare.

SCENE 6

Forres. The palace

Enter LENNOX *and another* LORD

Lennox. My former speeches[1] have but hit your thoughts,
Which can interpret farther: only, I say

---

[1] FORMER SPEECHES—Lennox and the Lord to whom he is now speaking have talked about the happenings at Macbeth's castle on some former occasion. Lennox makes no direct accusations. He has probably spoken on the former occasion much as he does now—simply stating facts and leaving it to the other to "interpret farther," or in other words, to draw his own conclusions.

Things have been strangely borne.[2] The gracious Duncan
Was pitied of Macbeth: marry,[3] he was dead:
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late;
Whom, you may say, if 't please you, Fleance kill'd,
For Fleance fled: men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want[4] the thought, how monstrous
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
To kill their gracious father? damned fact![5]
How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight,
In pious rage, the two delinquents[6] tear,
That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;
For 't would have anger'd any heart alive
To hear the men deny 't. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well: and I do think
That, had he Duncan's sons under his key—
As, an 't[7] please heaven, he shall not—they should find
What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.
But, peace! for from[8] broad[9] words, and 'cause he fail'd
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell
Where he bestows[10] himself?
  Lord.   The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,[11]
Lives in the English court; and is receiv'd
Of the most pious Edward[12] with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing

---

[2] BORNE—Managed, carried on. [3] MARRY—A mild oath or expletive.
[4] WHO CANNOT WANT—Who can fail to think.
[5] FACT—Deed, especially an evil deed.
[6] TWO DELINQUENTS—Duncan's two grooms.
[7] AN 'T—And if it.
[8] FROM—On account of.
[9] BROAD—Out-spoken.
[10] BESTOWS—Keeps himself, lodges.
[11] THE SON OF DUNCAN, FROM WHOM THIS TYRANT HOLDS THE DUE OF BIRTH—Malcolm. "Holds" means withholds. "Due of birth" means the crown.
[12] MOST PIOUS EDWARD—EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, KING OF ENGLAND 1042–1066.

Takes from his high respect.[13] Thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland [14] and warlike Siward;
That by the help of these, with Him above
To ratify the work, we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights;
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
Do faithful homage and receive free honours;
All which we pine for now: and this report [15]
Hath so exasperate [16] the king, that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.
Lennox. Sent he to Macduff?
Lord. He did: and with an absolute 'Sir, not I,' [17]
The cloudy [18] messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who [19] should say, 'You'll rue the time
That [20] clogs me with this answer.'
Lennox. And that well might
Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance [21]
His [22] wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England and unfold
His message ere he come; that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country
Under a hand accurs'd! [23]
Lord. I'll send my prayers with him.
[*Exeunt*

---

[13] That the malevolence of fortune nothing takes from his high respect—That his misfortune has not made him the less respected.

[14] Northumberland—Holinshed says, "Malcolme purchased such favour at King Edward's hands that old Siward earle of Northumberland was appointed with ten thousand men to go with him into Scotland."

[15] This report—The report of Macduff's going to England.

[16] Exasperate—Exasperated.

[17] With an absolute 'sir, not i'—This was Macduff's reply to the messenger who brought Macbeth's command.

[18] Cloudy—Sullen, frowning. [19] As who—Like one who.

[20] That—The behavior of the messenger.

[21] To hold what distance—To keep what distance from Macbeth.

[22] His—Macduff's.

[23] Our suffering country under a hand accurs'd—Our country suffering under a hand accurs'd.

ACT IV

SCENE I

A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES

1 Witch. Thrice the brinded[1] cat[2] hath mew'd.
2 Witch. Thrice, and once[3] the hedge-pig whin'd.
3 Witch. Harpier[4] cries; 'tis time,[5] 'tis time.
1 Witch. Round about[6] the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails[7] throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd[8] venom[9] sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
2 Witch. Fillet of a fenny[10] snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;

---

[1] BRINDED—Marked with streaks, brindled.

[2] CAT—This is the graymalkin of Act I, Scene 1, the "familiar" of the first Witch.

[3] THRICE, AND ONCE—Odd numbers were thought to possess magical properties. The "thrice" is a repetition of the "thrice" in the first line. The "once" applies to the hedge-pig, which is the familiar of the second Witch.

[4] HARPIER—The familiar of the third Witch. It has been suggested that the word is meant for "harpy."

[5] 'TIS TIME—That is, to begin the preparations ordered by Hecate. See Act III, Scene 5.

[6] ROUND ABOUT—The dance to "wind up" the charm. See Act I, Scene 3.

[7] POISON'D ENTRAILS—Probably the entrails of some person who has been murdered by poison. Note that the ingredients of this "hell-broth" are chosen for their hideous and diabolical significance. Most of them reflect some dark superstition of Shakespeare's day.

[8] SWELTER'D—Sweated out.

[9] VENOM—It was the common belief that toads were poisonous.

[10] FENNY—One that lives in fens.

Eye of newt[11] and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork[12] and blind-worm's[13] sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's[14] wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
3 Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy,[15] maw[16] and gulf[17]
Of the ravin'd[18] salt-sea shark;
Root of hemlock[19] digg'd i' the dark,
Liver of blaspheming[20] Jew,
Gall of goat,[21] and slips of yew[22]
Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,[23]
Nose of Turk and Tartar's[24] lips,
Finger of birth-strangled[25] babe
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,[26]
Make the gruel thick and slab:[27]
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,[28]
For th' ingredients of our cauldron.

---

[11] NEWT—Salamander. It was believed that the salamander possessed magic properties, and that it could live in fire.

[12] FORK—Forked tongue.

[13] BLIND-WORM—The slow-worm, formerly believed to be venomous.

[14] HOWLET—Owlet. The owl was regarded as a bird of ill omen.

[15] MUMMY—In Shakespeare's day a balm for cuts and bruises was made from Egyptian mummies. It was the curious belief that in a mummy might be found the "balsam" by which the body heals a cut or bruise. A witch's mummy might be supposed to retain the evil power which the witch in life possessed.

[16] MAW—Stomach.

[17] GULF—Gullet.

[18] RAVIN'D—Glutted with food, presumably human flesh, for the shark has an old reputation for being a man-eater.

[19] HEMLOCK—The poisonous herb of this name.

[20] BLASPHEMING—So called, because not Christian.

[21] GOAT—In the Bible the goat represents the wicked, as in the expression to "separate the sheep from the goats."

[22] YEW—Formerly believed to be poisonous.

[23] MOON'S ECLIPSE—Generally held to be a time of ill omen.

[24] TURK AND TARTAR—Non-Christian and infidels.

[25] BIRTH-STRANGLED—Hence unchristened.

[26] DRAB—Harlot.

[27] SLAB—Slimy.

[28] CHAUDRON—Entrails.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
2 Witch. Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm [29] and good.

Enter HECATE *to the other three* WITCHES

Hecate. O, well done! I commend your pains;
And every one shall share i' th' gains:
And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.
[*Music, and a Song,*[30] "Black spirits," etc.
[*Exit Hecate*

2 Witch. By the pricking [31] of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes:
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is 't you do?
All. A deed without a name.
Macbeth. I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me:
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty [32] waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed [33] corn be lodg'd,[34] and trees blown down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;

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[29] FIRM—Certain, sure to work.

[30] SONG—This song "Black spirits and white, red spirits and gray" is to be found in Middleton's play, *The Witch.*

[31] PRICKING—Prickling. The witch interprets the prickling sensation in her thumb as a sign.

[32] YESTY—Foamy, frothy.

[33] BLADED—In the blade. Corn, of course, means grain, not corn in the sense in which Americans think of the word.

[34] LODG'D—Laid flat by the wind.

Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's germens [35] tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken; answer me
To what I ask you.
1 Witch. Speak.
2 Witch. Demand.
3 Witch. We'll answer.
1 Witch. Say, if thou 'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters?
Macbeth. Call 'em, let me see 'em.
1 Witch. Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow; [36] grease that's sweaten [37]
From the murderer's gibbet throw
Into the flame.
All. Come, high or low; [38]
Thyself and office [39] deftly show!

Thunder. First Apparition, *an armed Head* [40]

Macbeth. Tell me, thou unknown power,—
1 Witch. He knows thy thought: [41]
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.[42]
1 Apparition. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff;
Beware the thane of Fife.—Dismiss me: enough.
[*Descends*
Macbeth. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks;

---

[35] Germens—Germs.
[36] Nine farrow—Litter of nine pigs.
[37] Sweaten—Sweated.
[38] Come, high or low—The witches with these words summon or call up the apparitions which are to give answer to Macbeth.
[39] Office—Function. The meaning is: Give your message.
[40] *An Armed Head*—This is a representation of Macbeth's own head. Macbeth addressing it as "unknown power" fails to recognize what it really is.
[41] He knows thy thought—Of course. All the Apparition tells Macbeth is his own thought—his fear of Macduff.
[42] Say thou nought—Keep silent, lest you break the spell.

Thou hast harp'd my fear aright:[43] but one word more,—
1 Witch. He will not be commanded: here's another,
More potent[44] than the first.

Thunder. Second APPARITION, *a bloody Child*[45]

2 Apparition. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!
Macbeth. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.[46]
2 Apparition. Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth. [*Descends*
Macbeth. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,[47]
And take a bond of fate:[48] thou shalt not live;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

Thunder. Third APPARITION, *a Child crowned, with a tree in his hand*[49]

What is this,
That rises like the issue[50] of a king,

---

[43] HARP'D MY FEAR ARIGHT—Struck the note of my fear.

[44] POTENT—Powerful.

[45] *A bloody Child*—This represents Macduff who was "untimely ripped from his mother's womb."

[46] HAD I THREE EARS, I'D HEAR THEE—Had I three ears, I should listen with them all.

[47] MAKE ASSURANCE DOUBLE SURE—That is, by killing Macduff. Macbeth, of course, does not know that Macduff was not "born" in the ordinary sense of a natural birth. Nor does such an exception occur to him. He interprets the prophecy (or "riddle," See Note 3 to Act III, Scene 5) to mean that he need fear no man whatever, and trusts it implicitly. Yet he intends to make doubly sure by killing Macduff.

[48] TAKE A BOND OF FATE—A bond is a guarantee that the one who gives it (the one from whom it is taken) will do something—for example, Antonio's bond given to Shylock. Macbeth means that he will, in effect, by killing Macduff make fate give a guarantee or bond that he need fear no man.

[49] *A Child crowned, with a tree in his hand*—This represents Malcolm, the rightful king. The tree symbolizes Birnam wood which Malcolm's soldiers cut down and bear to high Dunsinane hill.

[50] ISSUE—Offspring.

And wears upon his baby brow the round[51]
And top of sovereignty?[52]
All. Listen, but speak not to 't.
3 Apparition. Be lion-mettl'd, proud; and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends*
Macbeth. That will never be:
Who can impress[53] the forest; bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements![54] good!
Rebellion's head, rise never till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-plac'd Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature,[55] pay his breath
To time and mortal custom.[56] Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing: tell me, if your art
Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?
All. Seek to know no more.
Macbeth. I will be satisfied: deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know:
Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is this?
[*Hautboys*[57]
1 Witch. Show!
2 Witch. Show!
3 Witch. Show!
All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

---

[51] ROUND—The crown.

[52] TOP OF SOVEREIGNTY—The symbol of kingly power.

[53] IMPRESS—To press, to force to serve as soldiers.

[54] SWEET BODEMENTS—Fair prophecies.

[55] LIVE THE LEASE OF NATURE—Live until he dies a natural death.

[56] PAY HIS BREATH TO TIME AND MORTAL CUSTOM—"Live the full time allotted and die a natural death."—Hudson.

[57] *Hautboys*—See Note 1, Act I, Scene 6. They are used in this play evidently to denote the approach of royalty.

A show[58] *of eight* Kings,[59] *the last with a glass in his hand;*
BANQUO'S Ghost *following*

Macbeth. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo;[60] down!
Thy crown does sear[61] mine eyeballs. And thy hair,
Thy other gold-hound brow, is like the first:
A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!
What, will the line stretch out to th' crack of doom?[62]
Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more:
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass[63]
Which shows me many more; and some I see
That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry:[64]
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true;
For the bloodbolter'd[65] Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his. What, is this so?
1 Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so; but why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?[66]
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,[67]

---

[58] *A show*—That is, a dumb show.

[59] *Eight* KINGS—These are the eight Stuart kings of Scotland, Robert II, Robert III, and the six Jameses, the last of whom, James VI, was also James I of England and was on the throne when this play was given. See *The Background of Macbeth.* There was a legend that Fleance fled into Wales, that he married a daughter of the Prince of Wales, and that his son became Lord High Steward of Scotland. From this office he took the name Walter Stewart (Stuart), founding the House of Stuart from which came the Stuart kings including James VI of Scotland and I of England.

[60] SPIRIT OF BANQUO—The ghost of Banquo. That is, these kings resemble Banquo. Note that Macbeth does not think of the Banquo he knew in the flesh, but always of the ghost.

[61] SEAR—Burn.

[62] CRACK OF DOOM—The thunder peal of the Judgment Day.

[63] GLASS—A mirror. A mirror or looking-glass was used in Shakespeare's day in making divinations and foretelling future events. For an account of its use and for other methods of divining, see Brand's *Observations on Popular Antiquities.*

[64] THAT TWOFOLD BALLS AND TREBLE SCEPTRES CARRY—A direct reference to James I of England who saw this play, and one which no doubt pleased that monarch's colossal vanity. The "twofold balls" refer probably to the two crowns united by James—those of England and Scotland; the "treble sceptres" to the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

[65] BLOODBOLTER'D—Tis hair matted with blood.

[66] AMAZEDLY—Like one stunned.

[67] SPRITES—Spirits.

And show the best of our delights:
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic [68] round;
That this great king may kindly say
Our duties did his welcome pay.
[*Music. The Witches dance, and vanish with Hecate*

Macbeth. Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious three hour
Stand aye [69] accursed in the calendar!
Come in, without there! [70]

Enter LENNOX

Lennox. What's your grace's will?
Macbeth. Saw you the weird sisters?
Lennox. No, my lord.
Macbeth. Came they not by you?
Lennox. No, indeed, my lord.
Macbeth. Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damn'd all those that trust them! I did hear
The galloping of horse: who was 't came by?
Lennox. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.
Macbeth. Fled to England!
Lennox. Ay, my good lord.
Macbeth. [*Aside*] Time, thou anticipat'st [71] my dread three exploits:
The flighty [72] purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it: from this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand.[73] And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:

---

[68] ANTIC—Grotesque.

[69] AYE—Forever.

[70] WITHOUT THERE—That is, without the "pit of Acheron" or cave where Macbeth met the witches.

[71] ANTICIPAT'ST—Dost prevent.

[72] FLIGHTY—Fleeting.

[73] THE VERY FIRSTLINGS OF MY HEART SHALL BE THE FIRSTLINGS OF MY HAND—I shall no sooner think of a thing than I shall do it.

The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool:
But no more sights.[74] Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt*

---

[74] SIGHTS—Apparitions.

SCENE 2

Fife. MACDUFF'S *castle*

Enter LADY MACDUFF, *her* SON, *and* ROSS

Lady Macduff. What had he done,[1] to make him fly the land?
Ross. You must have patience, madam.
Lady Macduff. He had none;
His flight was madness: when our actions do not,
Our fears do make us[2] traitors.
Ross. You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.
Lady Macduff. Wisdom! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His mansion, and his titles,[3] in a place
From whence himself does fly![4] He loves us not;
He wants the natural touch:[5] for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest,[6] against the owl.

---

[1] WHAT HAD HE DONE—Lady Macduff thinks that Macduff must have committed some act of treason or rebellion. She cannot understand why else one should be obliged to take flight.

[2] MAKE US—Make us act as if we were.

[3] TITLES—Property, possessions.

[4] WISDOM! TO LEAVE HIS WIFE, TO LEAVE HIS BABES . . . IN A PLACE FROM WHENCE HIMSELF DOES FLY!—Lady Macduff is out of patience with her husband's flight in leaving her and his children in a place from which he himself flees.

[5] NATURAL TOUCH—The natural feeling or instinct which makes the wren protect its young.

[6] HER YOUNG ONES IN HER NEST—Her young ones being in the nest.

All is the fear[7] and nothing is the love;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.
Ross. My dearest coz,[8]
I pray you, school yourself: but, for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' the season.[9] I dare not speak much further:
But cruel are the times when we are traitors
And do not know ourselves;[10] when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and move.[11] I take my leave of you;
Shall not be long but I'll be here again.
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward[12]
To what they were before. My pretty cousin,[13]
Blessing upon you!
Lady Macduff. Father'd he[14] is, and yet he's fatherless.
Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort.[15]
I take my leave at once. [*Exit*
Lady Macduff. Sirrah,[16] your father's dead:
And what will you do now? How will you live?
Son. As birds do, mother.
Lady Macduff. What, with worms and flies?

---

[7] ALL IS THE FEAR—Holinshed says that Macduff fled for fear of his life. Do you think Shakespeare intends this impression? Can you justify his leaving his family behind?

[8] Coz—Cousin.

[9] FITS O' THE SEASON—The turn which things are taking.

[10] DO NOT KNOW OURSELVES—Do not know that we are traitors.

[11] WHEN WE HOLD RUMOR . . . EACH WAY AND MOVE—The meaning is: When having done nothing wrong, yet we fear, because we hear rumors that we are held as having done wrong. In such a case we "float . . . each way and move," that is, like a storm-tossed ship we can take no sure course for we know not what is the right thing to do or what is the wrong.

[12] CLIMB UPWARD—The figure of the storm-tossed ship wallowing in the trough of a wave is continued. To "climb upward" means to climb up the crest and get on its course and make headway.

[13] MY PRETTY COUSIN—This is addressed to Macduff's boy. What acting accompanies the remark?

[14] HE—The boy.

[15] MY DISGRACE AND YOUR DISCOMFORT—Disgrace myself and distress you.

[16] SIRRAH—This term was also used in addressing children.

Son. With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

Lady Macduff. Poor bird! thou 'dst never fear the net nor lime,[17]
The pitfall[18] nor the gin.[19]

Son. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for.
My father is not dead, for all your saying.

Lady Macduff. Yes, he is dead: how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

Lady Macduff. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

Lady Macduff. Thou speak'st with all thy wit;[20] and yet i' faith,
With wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

Lady Macduff. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

Lady Macduff. Why, one that swears and lies.[21]

Son. And be all traitors that do so?

Lady Macduff. Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hang'd.

Son. And must they all be hang'd that swear and lie?[22]

Lady Macduff. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them?

Lady Macduff. Why, the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools; for there are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and hang up them.

Lady Macduff. Now, God help thee, poor monkey! But how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. If he were dead, you'd weep for him: if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

Lady Macduff. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

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[17] LIME—Bird-lime, a sticky substance smeared on twigs to catch birds.

[18] PITFALL—A trap.

[19] GIN—Snare. All these were common devices for catching small birds, which in Shakespeare's time were still used in pies and other dishes.

[20] WIT—Understanding.

[21] SWEARS AND LIES—Swears allegiance falsely.

[22] THAT SWEAR AND LIE—The boy takes the expression literally.

Enter a MESSENGER

Messenger. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.[23]
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly:
If you will take a homely man's advice,
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage;
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,[24]
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!
I dare abide no longer. [*Exit*
Lady Macduff. Whither should I fly?
I have done no harm. But I remember now
I am in this earthly world; where to do harm
Is often laudable,[25] to do good sometime
Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly[26] defence,
To say I have done no harm?—What are these faces?[27]

Enter MURDERERS

1 Murderer. Where is your husband?
Lady Macduff. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.
1 Murderer. He's a traitor.
Son. Thou liest, thou shag-ear'd[28] villain!
1 Murderer. [*Stabbing him*] What, you egg!
Young fry of treachery![29]
Son. He has kill'd me, mother:
Run away, I pray you! [*Dies*
[*Exit Lady Macduff, crying 'Murder!'*
Exeunt Murderers, following her

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[23] IN YOUR STATE OF HONOUR I AM PERFECT—Perfectly acquainted with your rank.

[24] FELL CRUELTY—Direct cruelty.

[25] LAUDABLE—Praiseworthy.

[26] WOMANLY—Womanish.

[27] FACES—Evidently the faces of these murderers reveal their characters.

[28] SHAG-EAR'D—Hairy eared.

[29] YOUNG FRY OF TREACHERY—Son of a traitor.

SCENE 3

England. Before the King's palace

Enter MALCOLM *and* MACDUFF

Malcolm. Let us seek out some desolate shade,[1] and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.
Macduff. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal[2] sword, and, like good men,
Bestride[3] our down-fall'n birthdom.[4] Each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it[5] resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
Like[6] syllable of dolour.[7]
Malcolm. What I believe, I'll wail;
What know, believe; and what I can redress,
As I shall find the time to friend,[8] I will.[9]
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.[10]
This tryant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
Was once thought honest: you have lov'd him well;

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[1] LET US SEEK OUT SOME DESOLATE SHADE—What Malcolm proposes is, in effect, that instead of trying to redress their wrongs, they lose themselves in some wild distant land and try to forget them. This makes Malcolm seem to be a kind of spiritless fellow. It should be remembered that he does not trust Macduff at first, and that throughout most of the scene he puts himself in an unfavorable light in order to try Macduff's sincerity.

[2] MORTAL—Deadly.

[3] BESTRIDE—As a knight did the body of a comrade who had fallen in battle.

[4] BIRTHDOM—Native land. [5] IT—Heaven.

[6] LIKE—Similar. [7] DOLOUR—Pain.

[8] TIME TO FRIEND—A friendly or favorable time.

[9] I WILL—Note the reserved nature of Malcolm's entire speech. He implies that as bad as things are, Macduff's account is overdrawn. "I will bewail" he says "what I believe, and I'll believe only what I know." He professes to be unimpressed by Macduff.

[10] WHAT YOU HAVE SPOKE, IT MAY BE SO PERCHANCE—Here Malcolm says, in effect, "These things you tell of may be so." The implication is, that things are not so bad, and as proof, Malcolm says below, "He hath not touched you yet." Malcolm's policy is to put on this lukewarm manner to see how Macduff reacts to it.

He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young; but something
You may discern of him through me, and wisdom
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
T' appease an angry god.[11]
Macduff. I am not treacherous.
Malcolm. But Macbeth is.
A good and virtuous nature may recoil
In an imperial charge.[12] But I shall crave your pardon;
That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose[13]
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell:
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
Yet grace must still look so.[14]
Macduff. I have lost my hopes.[15]

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[11] I AM YOUNG . . . T' APPEASE AN ANGRY GOD—The exact meaning here is difficult although the general drift of what Malcolm proposes is clear enough. The meaning seems to be: "Although I am yet young and my faults and weaknesses seem to be but those of youth and not deep-seated faults in my character, yet your discernment should be able to distinguish how much more fit he, with all his faults, is to be king than I am. And you will discern the wisdom of denying allegiance to me in order to make your peace with him." The things which Malcolm elaborates to test Macduff all go to show his inherent unfitness to be king.

[12] A GOOD AND VIRTUOUS NATURE MAY RECOIL IN AN IMPERIAL CHARGE—Macduff's reply to Malcolm's proposal is to assert that he is not treacherous. To this Malcolm retorts, "No, but Macbeth is. And although you may not be, yet a good and virtuous man acts contrary (recoil) to his nature when the king lays him under command (imperial charge)."

[13] BUT I SHALL CRAVE YOUR PARDON; THAT WHICH YOU ARE, MY THOUGHTS CANNOT TRANSPOSE—Malcolm's apology is none at all. What he says is, "I beg your pardon for insinuating that you are treacherous, but whatever the truth is, whether you are treacherous or not my thinking you one thing or the other will not make you what I think you to be." Malcolm, in assuming this attitude, is perhaps more irritating to Macduff than he would be if he accused Macduff outright of treachery, for he seems to be quite disinterested in Macduff's and his country's cause.

[14] ANGELS ARE BRIGHT STILL . . . YET GRACE MUST STILL LOOK SO—Malcolm says in effect, "I really have no right to accuse you (although I have my own opinion), for some angels are still bright even though some did fall, and virtue must continue to wear its own looks although vice frequently assumes the outward appearance of virtue."

[15] I HAVE LOST MY HOPES—Macduff is discouraged and disappointed. Who wouldn't be? How different have been both Malcolm and his reception from what he must have expected? Malcolm, from whom he hoped aid and encouragement has said, "You may or may not be treacherous. Of course, the fact that Macbeth is, doesn't prove that you are; but anyway, what of it?"

Malcolm. Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.[16]
Why in that rawness[17] left you wife and child,
Those precious motives,[18] those strong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,
Let not my jealousies[19] be your dishonours,
But mine own safeties: you may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.
Macduff. Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee; wear thou thy wrongs;[20]
The title is affeer'd![21] Fare thee well, lord:
I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tryant's grasp,
And the rich East to boot.
Malcolm. Be not offended:
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;
It weeps, it bleeds; and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds: I think withal
There would be hands uplifted in my right;
And here from gracious England[22] have I offer
Of goodly thousands: but, for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before;
More suffer, and more sundry ways[23] than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

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[16] PERCHANCE EVEN THERE WHERE I DID FIND MY DOUBTS—Malcolm interprets "hopes" in a different sense from that in which Macduff uses it. He says in effect, "Your leaving your wife and child behind is the circumstance which has caused me to doubt your sincerity and to suspect that you came with "hopes" of enticing me back to Scotland to betray me."

[17] RAWNESS—Hastiness, without making adequate provision for their care.

[18] MOTIVES—Incentives.

[19] JEALOUSIES—Suspicions. The sense is: "Do not interpret my suspicions as insults to you but rather as precautions for myself."

[20] WEAR THOU THY WRONGS—Display your wrongs.

[21] AFFEER'D—Confirmed.

[22] ENGLAND—The king of England.

[23] AND MORE SUNDRY WAYS—And in more sundry ways.

Macduff. What should he be?
Malcolm. It is myself I mean; in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted,
That, when they shall be open'd,[24] black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow; and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compar'd
With my confineless harms.[25]
Macduff. Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
In evils to top[26] Macbeth.
Malcolm. I grant him bloody,
Luxurious,[27] avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden,[28] malicious, smacking of every sin[29]
That has a name: but there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness; your wives, your daughters,
Your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up
The cistern of my lust, and my desire
All continent[30] impediments would o'erbear,
That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth
Than such an one to reign.
Macduff. Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny;[31] it hath been
Th' untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours: you may
Convey[32] your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.[33]
Malcolm. With this[34] there grows,
In my most ill-compos'd affection[35] such

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[24] Open'd—Disclosed. [25] Confineless harms—Unlimited vices.
[26] Top—Surpass. [27] Luxurious—Licentious.
[28] Sudden—Violent, quick to anger.
[29] Every sin—Macbeth is here charged with the seven deadly sins.
[30] Continent—Restraining.
[31] Boundless intemperance in nature is a tyranny—It is an overruling passion. [32] Convey—Pursue in secret.
[33] The time you may so hoodwink—You may so deceive the world.
[34] With this—In addition to this.
[35] Ill-compos'd affection—Nature made up of vices.

A stanchless[36] avarice that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
Desire his[37] jewels and this other's house:
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more, that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.
Macduff. This avarice
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming[38] lust, and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings:[39] yet do not fear;
Scotland hath foisons[40] to fill up your will
Of your mere own:[41] all these are portable,[42]
With other graces weigh'd.
Malcolm. But I have none: the king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity,[43] temperance,[44] stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish[45] of them; but abound
In the division[46] of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar[47] the universal peace, confound[48]
All unity on earth.

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[36] Stanchless—Insatiable. [37] His—This one's.

[38] Summer-seeming—Like the summer, quickly passing. It is contrasted with avarice, the vice of old age.

[39] The sword of our slain kings—Holinshed makes Macduff say: "For avarice is the root of all mischiefe, and for this crime the most part of our kings have been slaine and brought to their finall end."

[40] Foisons—Abundance. According to Holinshed, "gold and riches inough in Scotland to satisfie thy greedie desire."

[41] Your mere own—Absolutely your own.

[42] Portable—Endurable. The sense is that all these vices are endurable if counterbalanced by other virtues.

[43] Verity—Honesty. [44] Temperance—Self-control.

[45] Relish—Savor, smack. [46] In the division—Variation.

[47] Uproar—Throw into uproar.

[48] Confound—Destroy.

Macduff. O Scotland, Scotland!
Malcolm. If such a one be fit to govern, speak:
I am as I have spoken.
Macduff. Fit to govern!
No, not to live. O nation miserable,
With an untitled [49] tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue [50] of thy throne
By his own interdiction [51] stands accurs'd,
And does blaspheme his breed? [52] Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she liv'd.[53] Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Hath banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!
Malcolm. Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wip'd the black scruples, reconcil'd my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains [54] hath sought to win me
Into his power; and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste: but God above
Deal between thee and me! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction; here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers [55] to my nature. I am yet
Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,

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[49] UNTITLED—Having no right or title to the crown.

[50] TRUEST ISSUE—Malcolm, the legitimate heir.

[51] INTERDICTION—Pronouncement.

[52] BLASPHEME HIS BREED—Slander his parentage.

[53] DIED EVERY DAY SHE LIV'D—"Every day of her life was a preparation for death."—Clarendon.

[54] TRAINS—Lures, devices.

[55] FOR STRANGERS—As strangers.

At no time broke my faith, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight
No less in truth than life: my first false speaking
Was this upon myself. What I am truly,
Is thine and my poor country's to command;
Whither, indeed, before thy here-approach,
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
Already at a point,[56] was setting forth:
Now we'll together; and the chance of goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel! [57] Why are you silent?
Macduff. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a DOCTOR

Malcolm. Well; more anon.—Comes the king forth, I pray you?
Doctor. Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls
That stay his cure: [58] their malady convinces
The great assay of art; [59] but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.
Malcolm. I thank you, doctor.
[*Exit Doctor*
Macduff. What's the disease he means?
Malcolm. 'Tis call'd the evil:

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[56] AT A POINT—Prepared, armed at point.

[57] THE CHANCE OF GOODNESS BE LIKE OUR WARRANTED QUARREL—May the chances of success be as good as the justice of our cause.

[58] STAY HIS CURE—Wait his healing touch. This episode has nothing to do with the play. It is generally believed to have been introduced as a compliment to King James. Holinshed gives the following account of Edward's gift: "As hath been though he . . . hadde the gift of healing infirmities and diseases. Namely he used to help those that were vexed with the disease, commonly called the Kyngs evill, and left that vertue . . . unto his successors the Kyngs of this Realme." The "Kyngs evill" was scrofula. The practice of "touching" to cure it was followed by Edward's successors down to Queen Anne who touched Samuel Johnson, as students who have read Macaulay's *Life of Johnson* will remember.

[59] THEIR MALADY CONVINCES THE GREAT ASSAY OF ART—Their disease overcomes the best effort of professional skill.

A most miraculous work in this good king;
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits [60] heaven,
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited [61] people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere [62] despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp [63] about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers: [64] and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction.[65] With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross

Macduff. See, who comes here?
Malcolm. My countryman; but yet I know him not.[66]
Macduff. My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.
Malcolm. I know him now. Good God, betimes [67] remove
The means [68] that makes us strangers!
Ross. Sir, amen.
Macduff. Stands Scotland where it did?
Ross. Alas, poor country,
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave: where nothing,
But who knows nothing,[69] is once seen to smile;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air,
Are made, not mark'd; [70] where violent sorrow seems

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[60] SOLICITS—Invokes and obtains the aid of.
[61] STRANGELY-VISITED—Strangely-afflicted.
[62] MERE—Utter, complete. [63] GOLDEN STAMP—A coin of gold.
[64] HOLY PRAYERS—There was a special prayer to be used in touching. From 1684 to 1719 it was included in the Book of Common Prayer.
[65] THE HEALING BENEDICTION—"The blessed gift of healing."
[66] BUT YET I KNOW HIM NOT—Malcolm recognizes him by his dress.
[67] BETIMES—Forthwith, soon. [68] MEANS—Cause.
[69] WHO KNOWS NOTHING—Such as the idiot and the fool.
[70] NOT MARK'D—They are so common as no longer to excite notice.

A modern ecstasy:[71] the dead man's knell
Is there scarce ask'd for who;[72] and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.
Macduff. O, relation[73]
Too nice,[74] and yet too true!
Malcolm. What's the newest grief?
Ross. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker,[75]
Each minute teems[76] a new one.
Macduff. How does my wife?
Ross. Why, well.
Macduff. And all my children?
Ross. Well too.
Macduff. The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?
Ross. No; they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.
Macduff. Be not a niggard of your speech: how goes 't?
Ross. When I came hither to transport the tidings
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out;[77]
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot:
Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff[78] their dire distresses.
Malcolm. Be 't their comfort
We are coming thither: gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.
Ross. Would I could answer

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[71] A MODERN ECSTASY—A state of feeling which has become commonplace.

[72] THE DEAD MAN'S KNELL IS THERE SCARCE ASK'D FOR WHO—People hardly ask for whom the knell is being rung, deaths are so much an ordinary occurrence.

[73] RELATION—Account.

[74] NICE—Exact, accurate.

[75] DOTH HISS THE SPEAKER—Whoever tells of an atrocity which is only an hour old is regarded much as the player who is hissed for presenting "old stuff."

[76] TEEMS—Brings forth.

[77] OUT—Out in arms.

[78] DOFF—Put off.

This comfort with the like! But I have words
That would be [79] howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch [80] them.
Macduff. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief
Due to some single breast? [81]
Ross. No mind that's honest
But in it shares some woe; though the main part
Pertains to you alone.
Macduff. If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.
Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.
Macduff. Hum! I guess at it.
Ross. Your castle is surpris'd; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry [82] of these murder'd deer,
To add the death of you.[83]
Malcolm. Merciful heaven!
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
Whispers [84] the o'er-fraught [85] heart and bids it break.
Macduff. My children too?
Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.
Macduff. And I must be from thence!
My wife kill'd too?
Ross. I have said.
Malcolm. Be comforted:
Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

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[79] Would be—Ought to be, should only be. [80] Latch—Catch.

[81] A fee-grief due to some single breast—A grief which concerns one man only. [82] Quarry—Heap, used to designate the game killed.

[83] To add the death of you—Would be to cause your death.

[84] Whispers—As we say "bespeaks." [85] O'er-fraught—Over-laden.

Macduff. He [86] has no children.—All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?
Malcolm. Dispute it [87] like a man.
Macduff. I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man:
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! naught [88] that I am,
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now!
Malcolm. Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.
Macduff. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,
Cut short all intermission; front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he scape,
Heaven forgive him too! [89]
Malcolm. This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the king; our power is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave.[90] Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments.[91] Receive what cheer you may:
The night is long that never finds the day. [*Exeunt*

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[86] He—Malcolm. Macduff means that it is easy to see that Malcolm has no children. He talks of revenge. Revenge will not bring back those whom Macbeth has slain. Macduff is overcome by his grief; he thinks rather of those whom he will see no more than of revenge. This comes later.

[87] Dispute it—Resist it. [88] Naught—Worthless.

[89] Forgive him too—If for any reason I let him escape, why, then let Heaven let him escape too. This type of expression is a kind of idiom in common present day use. It is a negative way of saying, "There is no more chance of his escaping hell than there is of his escaping me."

[90] Our lack is nothing but our leave—We lack nothing but taking leave of the king.

[91] Put on their instruments—Set their agents at work to shake Macbeth.

ACT V

SCENE I

Dunsinane. Enter-room in the Castle

Enter a DOCTOR *of Physic and a* WAITING-GENTLEWOMAN

Doctor. I have two nights watch'd with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walk'd?

Gentlewoman. Since his majesty went into the field,[1] I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her night-gown[2] upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon 't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doctor. A great perturbation[3] in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching![4] In this slumbery agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances,[5] what, at any time, have you heard her say?

Gentlewoman. That, sir, which I will not report[6] after her.

Doctor. You may to me; and 'tis most meet[7] you should.

Gentlewoman. Neither to you nor any one; having no witness to confirm my speech.

Enter LADY MACBETH, *with a taper*

Lo, you, here she comes! This is her very guise;[8] and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.[9]

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[1] WENT INTO THE FIELD—To put down the "many worthy fellows that were out." See Act IV, Scene 3.

[2] NIGHT-GOWN—Dressing robe.

[3] PERTURBATION—Disturbance, especially of the mind.

[4] DO THE EFFECTS OF WATCHING—Do things as if she were awake.

[5] ACTUAL PERFORMANCES—Acts, things she does.

[6] WILL NOT REPORT—Will not repeat. What she has heard is of such a damaging nature that she fears getting herself into trouble if she repeats it; she implies in her next speech that what she has heard is something which she dare not report without a confirming witness. What did she hear Lady Macbeth say?

[7] MEET—Proper, fit.

[8] HER VERY GUISE—Her manner exactly, "accustom'd action."

[9] STAND CLOSE—Keep out of sight.

Doctor. How came she by that light?

Gentlewoman. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

Doctor. You see, her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Ay, but their sense are [10] shut.

Doctor. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gentlewoman. It is an accustom'd action with her, to seem thus washing her hands; I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady Macbeth. Yet here's a spot.

Doctor. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady Macbeth. Out, damned spot! out, I say!—One, two; [11] why, then 'tis time to do 't.—Hell is murky! [12]—Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? [13] What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? [14]—Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doctor. Do you mark that?

Lady Macbeth. The thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean? [15]—No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.[16]

Doctor. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

---

[10] SENSE ARE—We should say, "sense is."

[11] ONE, TWO—Lady Macbeth seems to hear the bell which she struck to signal Macbeth that his drink was ready and that it was "time to do 't." The student should note that Lady Macbeth's disordered mind recalls disconnected scraps of what had passed between her and her husband, mixed with horrid reminiscences of the crime itself.

[12] HELL IS MURKY—Find the lines:

"Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell."

[13] FIE, MY LORD, FIE! A SOLDIER AND AFEARD—What scene is she living over here?

[14] WHAT NEED WE FEAR WHO KNOWS IT, WHEN NONE CAN CALL OUR POWER TO ACCOUNT—Where did she make a similar speech?

[15] WHAT, WILL THESE HANDS NE'ER BE CLEAN—When did Lady Macbeth say, "A little water clears us of this deed"?

[16] STARTING—From what scene does this memory come?

Gentlewoman. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

Lady Macbeth. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Doctor. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charg'd.[17]

Gentlewoman. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doctor. Well, well, well,—

Gentlewoman. Pray God it be, sir.

Doctor. This disease is beyond my practice: yet I have known those which have walk'd in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady Macbeth. Wash your hands;[18] put on your nightgown; look not so pale.[19] I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on 's grave.[20]

Doctor. Even so?

Lady Macbeth. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate:[21] come, come, come, come, give me your hand: what's done cannot be undone:[22] to bed, to bed, to bed. [*Exit*

Doctor. Will she go now to bed?

Gentlewoman. Directly.

Doctor. Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets:
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,[23]
And still[24] keep eyes upon her.[25] So, good night:

---

[17] SORELY CHARG'D—Heavy, heavily laden.

[18] WASH YOUR HANDS—To what scene does this refer?

[19] PUT ON YOUR NIGHT GOWN; LOOK NOT SO PALE—Where did Lady Macbeth use similar words?

[20] BANQUO'S BURIED; HE CANNOT COME OUT ON 'S GRAVE—To what speech of Macbeth's does this refer?

[21] THERE'S KNOCKING AT THE GATE—Find the scene referred to.

[22] WHAT'S DONE CANNOT BE UNDONE—Where did she express a similar thought?

[23] MEANS OF ALL ANNOYANCE—Things with which she might harm herself.

[24] STILL—Always.

[25] KEEP EYES UPON HER—Why?

My mind she has mated,[26] and amaz'd my sight:
I think, but dare not speak.
Gentlewoman. Good night, good doctor.
[*Exeunt*

[26] MATED—Confounded, bewildered.

SCENE 2

The country near Dunsinane

Drum and colours. Enter MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, *and* Soldiers

Menteith. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward, and the good Macduff:
Revenges burn[1] in them; for their dear causes[2]
Would to the bleeding[3] and the grim alarm[4]
Excite the mortified man.[5]
Angus. Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.
Caithness. Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?
Lennox. For certain, sir, he is not: I have a file[6]
Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son,
And many unrough[7] youths, that even now
Protest their first of manhood.[8]
Menteith. What does the tyrant?
Caithness. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:
Some say he's mad;[9] others, that lesser hate him,
Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,

---

[1] REVENGES BURN—We say "revenge burns."
[2] DEAR CAUSES—Grievous complaints.
[3] BLEEDING—Bloody.
[4] ALARM—Call to arms.
[5] EXCITE THE MORTIFIED MAN—Rouse the dead to fight.
[6] FILE—List.
[7] UNROUGH—Smooth-face, beardless.
[8] PROTEST THEIR FIRST OF MANHOOD—Declare themselves no longer mere boys but men, making this the first act of their manhood.
[9] MAD—Insane.

He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause[10]
Within the belt of rule.
Angus. Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands;
Now minutely revolts[11] upbraid[12] his faith-breach;[13]
Those he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love:[14] now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.
Menteith. Who then shall blame
His pester'd[15] senses to recoil and start,[16]
When all that is within him does condemn
Itself for being there?[17]
Caithness. Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly ow'd:
Meet we the medicine[18] of the sickly weal;[19]
And with him pour we in our country's purge[20]
Each drop of us.
Lennox. Or so much as it needs
To dew the sovereign flower[21] and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam. [*Exeunt, marching*

---

[10] DISTEMPER'D CAUSE—Diseased cause. Macbeth's cause is compared to a body swollen with dropsy which cannot be buckled in. The sense of the lines is: He cannot control his rebellious subjects nor make his plans go right.

[11] MINUTELY REVOLTS—Revolts breaking out every minute.

[12] UPBRAID—Find fault with, rebuke.

[13] FAITH-BREACH—His breach of allegiance to Duncan.

[14] MOVE ONLY IN COMMAND, NOTHING IN LOVE—His followers obey him not out of liking for him but only out of fear for his authority.

[15] PESTER'D—Perplexed.

[16] TO RECOIL AND START—For recoiling and starting, that is, for acting, as we say, by fits and starts. We have here a good description of Macbeth alternating between fits of dark depression and starts of "valiant fury."

[17] WHEN ALL THAT IS WITHIN HIM DOES CONDEMN ITSELF FOR BEING THERE—When Macbeth turns his thoughts inward, he finds nothing but what should be condemned . It is then he "recoils" to feverish activity.

[18] MEDICINE—That is, Malcolm. [19] WEAL—Commonwealth, state.

[20] PURGE—The figure of "medicine" for a "sickly weal" is continued. The sense is: Each of us devote ourselves to restoring our country to health—to purging it.

[21] DEW THE SOVEREIGN FLOWER—To water or nourish the herb from which the sovereign remedy for the sickly weal will be made. "Sovereign" is used here in the sense of sovereign, or powerful, and in the sense of royal.

SCENE 3

Dunsinane. A room in the castle

Enter MACBETH, *the* DOCTOR, *and* Attendants

Macbeth. Bring me no more reports; let them[1] fly all:
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint[2] with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounc'd me thus:[3]
'Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee.' Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures:[4]
The mind I sway by[5] and the heart I bear
Shall never sag[6] with doubt nor shake with fear.

Enter a SERVANT

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd loon![7]
Where got'st thou that goose look?
Servant. There is ten thousand—
Macbeth. Geese, villain?
Servant. Soldiers, sir.
Macbeth. Go prick thy face, and over-red[8] thy fear,
Thou lily-liver'd[9] boy. What soldiers, patch?[10]
Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks[11] of thine

---

[1] THEM—His thanes and their soldiers. He has been receiving reports of their desertions.

[2] TAINT—Become infected.

[3] ME THUS—Thus for me.

[4] ENGLISH EPICURES—Holinshed records that the Scotch (whose barren country had accustomed them to plain living and few comforts) looked upon the English not without contempt as gormandizers and "likerous delicats."

[5] SWAY BY—By which I am ruled.

[6] SAG—Droop.

[7] LOON—Stupid fellow, not the bird. Despite his boast, Macbeth starts at the pallid face of the servant, and tried to bolster his own confidence by his own "valiant fury."

[8] OVER-RED—Smear your blood over your pallid face.

[9] LILY-LIVER'D—Cowardly. The liver was believed to be the seat of courage, much as the heart is still spoken of as the seat of pity.

[10] PATCH—Fool.

[11] LINEN CHEEKS—Colorless cheeks.

Are counsellors to fear.[12] What soldiers, whey-face?[13]
Servant. The English force, so please you.
Macbeth. Take thy face hence. [*Exit Servant*
Seyton![14]—I am sick at heart,
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push[15]
Will chair me ever, or disseat me now.[16]
I have liv'd long enough: my way of life[17]
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
Seyton![18]

Enter SEYTON

Seyton. What's your gracious pleasure?
Macbeth. What news more?
Seyton. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.
Macbeth. I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.
Give me my armour.
Seyton. 'Tis not needed yet.
Macbeth. I'll put it on.
Send out moe[19] horses, skirr[20] the country round;
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.
How does your patient, doctor?
Doctor. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

---

[12] ARE COUNSELLORS TO FEAR—Cause all who see them to fear.

[13] WHEY-FACE—What is the color of whey?

[14] SEYTON—Between calls, Macbeth gives way to one of his black fits which alternate with moods of fury.

[15] PUSH—Attack.

[16] CHAIR ME EVER, OR DISSEAT ME NOW—Will make my seat secure if I win, or disseat me if I lose in the coming attack.

[17] MY WAY OF LIFE—The course of my life.

[18] SEYTON—Macbeth's armor bearer.

[19] MOE—More. [20] SKIRR—Scour.

Macbeth. Cure her of that.
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out [21] the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious [22] antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?
Doctor. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.
Macbeth. Throw physic [23] to the dogs, I'll none of it.
Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff.[24]
Seyton, send out.[25] Doctor, the thanes fly from me.
Come, sir, dispatch.[26] If thou couldst, doctor, cast [27]
The water of my land, find her disease,
And purge [28] it [29] to a sound and pristine [30] health,
I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again. Pull 't off, I say.[31]
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?
Doctor. Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.
Macbeth. Bring it after me.
I will not be afraid of death and bane,[32]
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.
Doctor. [*Aside*] Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exeunt*

---

[21] RAZE OUT—Erase, blot out.

[22] OBLIVIOUS—Causing forgetfulness.

[23] PHYSIC—The whole practice of medicine.

[24] COME, PUT MINE ARMOUR ON; GIVE ME MY STAFF—Note the signs of Macbeth's great perturbation. He orders his armor put on, then pulled off, and finally brought after him. He must talk and he must be doing something. "Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff" is addressed to one (the armorer) whose duty it was to put the armor on.

[25] SEYTON, SENT OUT—To Seyton he turns with the direction to send out for further news; next he addresses the Doctor, and in the same breath orders the armorer to be quick about his business.

[26] DISPATCH—Be quick.

[27] CAST—Inspect, examine.

[28] PURGE—Restore by treatment.

[29] IT—My land.

[30] PRISTINE—Original.

[31] PULL 'T OFF—Macbeth here directs his armorer to pull his armor off.

[32] BANE—Ruin, destruction.

SCENE 4

Country near Birnam wood

Drum and colours. Enter MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD *and his* Son, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS, *and* Soldiers, *marching*

Malcolm. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.[1]
Menteith. We doubt it nothing.
Siward. What wood is this before us?
Menteith. The wood of Birnam.
Malcolm. Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear 't before him: thereby shall we shadow[2]
The numbers of our host, and make discovery[3]
Err in report of us.[4]
Soldiers. It shall be done.
Siward. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our sitting down before 't.[5]
Malcolm. 'Tis his main hope:
For, where there is advantage to be given,[6]
Both more and less[7] have given him the revolt,
And none serve with him but constrained things,[8]
Whose hearts are absent too.
Macduff. Let our just censures
Attend the true event,[9] and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

---

[1] CHAMBERS WILL BE SAFE—The allusion is probably to the chamber in which Duncan was murdered.

[2] SHADOW—Conceal.

[3] DISCOVERY—Reconnoitering.

[4] IN REPORT OF US—Shakespeare got this incident from Holinshed.

[5] SITTING DOWN BEFORE 'T—Besieging it.

[6] ADVANTAGE TO BE GIVEN—The sense is: Whenever there has been favorable opportunity.

[7] MORE AND LESS—Great and small.

[8] CONSTRAINED THINGS—Creatures who are forced to.

[9] LET OUR JUST CENSURES ATTEND THE TRUE EVENT—Let us hang the justice of our cause upon the outcome

Siward. The time approaches
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe.[10]
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate;[11]
Towards which, advance the war.[12] [*Exeunt, marching*

---

[10] WHAT WE SHALL SAY WE HAVE AND WHAT WE OWE—"Our assets and our debts. Time will show us how our account stands."—Grierson.

[11] THOUGHTS SPECULATIVE THEIR UNSURE HOPES RELATE, BUT CERTAIN ISSUE STROKES MUST ARBITRATE—Speculating about the outcome of an issue is only to give expression to hopes—which are not decisive. Fighting alone will yield a decisive result.

[12] TOWARDS WHICH, ADVANCE THE WAR—And toward the settlement of the issue, let us advance the war.

SCENE 5

Dunsinane. The castle

Enter MACBETH, SEYTON, *and* Soldiers, *with drum and colours*

Macbeth. Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still, 'They come.' Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn; here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up.
Were they not forc'd[1] with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful,[2] beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. [*A cry of women within*
What is that noise?
Seyton. It is the cry of women, my good lord. [*Exit*
Macbeth. I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair[3]
Would at a dismal treatise[4] rouse and stir
As life were in 't: I have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

---

[1] FORC'D—Reënforced. [2] DAREFUL—Defiant.

[3] FELL OF HAIR—My hair. "Fell" means skin of an animal.

m. [illegible]

Re-enter Seyton

Wherefore was that cry?
Seyton. The queen, my lord, is dead.
Macbeth. She should have died hereafter;[5]
There would have been a time for such a word.[6]
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Enter a Messenger

Thou com'st to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.
Messenger. Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do 't.
Macbeth. Well, say, sir.
Messenger. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.
Macbeth. Liar and slave!
Messenger. Let me endure your wrath, if 't be not so:
Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.
Macbeth. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,

---

[5] She should have died hereafter—Had she not died now, she would have died hereafter.

[6] There would have been a time for such a word—And there would have come a time when I should have had to hear of it. Why not now?

Till famine cling[7] thee: if thy speech be sooth,[8]
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution,[9] and begin
To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth: 'Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane'; and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!
If this which he[10] avouches[11] does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.[12]
I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish th' estate o' the world were now undone.[13]
Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack![14]
At least we'll die with harness[15] on our back. [*Exeunt*

---

[7] CLING—Shrive. [8] BE SOOTH—Be the truth.

[9] I PULL IN RESOLUTION—I am no longer so certain of the outcome.

[10] HE—The messenger.

[11] AVOUCHES—Assures me of, asserts.

[12] THERE IS NOR FLYING HENCE NOR TARRYING HERE—Neither flying hence nor tarrying here will affect the outcome.

[13] TH' ESTATE O' THE WORLD WERE NOW UNDONE—The whole world might fall into destruction.

[14] WRACK—Ruin. [15] HARNESS—Armor.

SCENE 6

Dunsinane. Before the castle

Drum and colours. Enter MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, MACDUFF, *and their* Army, *with boughs*

Malcolm. Now near enough; your leavy[1] screens throw down,
And show like those you are.[2] You, worthy uncle,
Shall, with my cousin, your right noble son,
Lead our first battle:[3] worthy Macduff and we

---

[1] LEAVY—Leafy. The leafy screens are the boughs which the soldiers carry.

[2] SHOW LIKE THOSE YOU ARE—Appear in your own likenesses without your camouflage.

[3] FIRST BATTLE—Vanguard.

Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,
According to our order.[4]

Siward. Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

Macduff. Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers[5] of blood and death. [*Exeunt*

[*Alarums continued*

---

[4] OUR ORDER—The order of battle decided upon beforehand.

[5] HARBINGERS—Forerunners, because blown to give the signal to begin the battle.

SCENE 7

Another part of the field

Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. They have tied me to a stake;[1] I cannot fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course.[2] What's he
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young SIWARD

Young Siward. What is thy name?

Macbeth. Thou 'lt be afraid to hear it.

Young Siward. No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in hell.

Macbeth. My name's Macbeth.

Young Siward. The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

---

[1] TIED ME TO A STAKE—Macbeth compares himself to the bear in the popular Elizabethan sport of bear-baiting. The bear was tethered to a stake at the end of a rope about fifteen feet long. Relays of dogs were set on him. The "sport" consisted in watching the ensuing battle.

[2] FIGHT THE COURSE—"Course" designates the battle between the bear and one set of dogs. We should probably say "round."

Macbeth. No, nor more fearful.
Young Siward. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.
[*They fight, and young Siward is slain*
Macbeth. Thou wast born of woman.
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born. [*Exit*

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF

Macduff. That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!
If thou be'st slain, and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.[3]
I cannot strike at wretched kerns,[4] whose arms
Are hir'd to bear their staves:[5] either thou, Macbeth,[6]
Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheathe again undeeded.[7] There[8] thou shouldst be;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited.[9] Let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarums*

Enter MALCOLM *and old* SIWARD

Siward. This way, my lord. The castle's gently[10] render'd.[11]
The tyrant's people on both sides[12] do fight;
The noble thanes do bravely in the war;
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.

[3] STILL—Forever, always.

[4] KERNS—See Note 11, Act I, Scene 2.

[5] STAVES—Lances, bills.

[6] EITHER THOU, MACBETH—Macduff means that he will fight none but Macbeth.

[7] UNDEEDED—Unused.

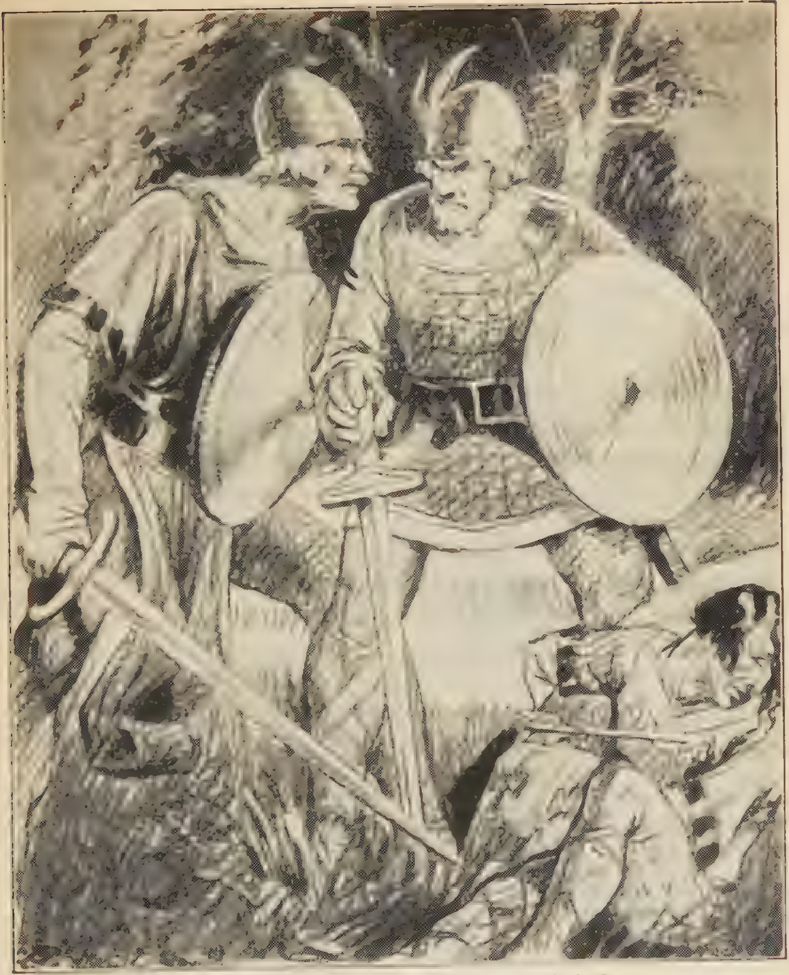
[8] THERE—Where the noise is—the noise Macduff notes in the first line of his speech.

[9] SEEMS BRUITED—Seems to be indicated by the noise and commotion.

[10] GENTLY—Without much resistance.

[11] RENDER'D—Surrendered.

[12] ON BOTH SIDES—Many have come over to Malcolm.



Macbeth. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back; my soul is too much charg'd
With blood of thine already.
Macduff. I have no words;
My voice is in my sword; thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out!

Act V: Scene 8.

Malcolm. We have met with foes
That strike beside[13] us.
Siward. Enter, sir, the castle.
[*Exeunt. Alarum*

---

[13] STRIKE BESIDE—Strike aside, that is, do not try to hit us. The sense is: They do not oppose us.

SCENE 8

Another part of the field

Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. Why should I play the Roman fool,[1] and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives,[2] the gashes
Do better upon them.

Enter MACDUFF

Macduff. Turn, hell-hound, turn!
Macbeth. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back; my soul is too much charg'd
With blood of thine already.
Macduff. I have no words,
My voice is in my sword; thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out![3] [*They fight*

Macbeth. Thou losest labour:[4]
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant[5] air
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmed[6] life, which must not yield[7]
To one of woman born.

---

[1] PLAY THE ROMAN FOOL—Kill myself, as Brutus and Cassius do in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*.

[2] LIVES—Living foes.

[3] THAN TERMS CAN GIVE THEE OUT—Than can be described in words.

[4] THOU LOSEST LABOR—Your efforts to kill me will be useless.

[5] INTRENCHANT—The "un-cuttable," that is, in the sense that it cannot be cut apart as a material thing can.

[6] CHARMED—Protected by a spell or by magic.

[7] MUST NOT YIELD—Does not have to yield.

Macduff. Despair[8] thy charm;
And let the angel[9] whom thou still[10] hast serv'd
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.

Macbeth. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd[11] my better part of man![12]
And be these juggling[13] fiends no more believ'd,
That palter[14] with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.[15] I'll not fight with thee.

Macduff. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole,[16] and underwrit,
'Here may you see the tyrant.'

Macbeth. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last:[17] before my body
I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff;
And damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'
[*Exeunt fighting. Alarums*

Retreat. Flourish. Enter with drum and colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, ROSS, *the other* Thanes, *and* Soldiers

Malcolm. I would the friends we miss were safe arriv'd.

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[8] DESPAIR—Put no trust or hope of safety in.

[9] ANGEL—Demon, spirit. [10] STILL—Always. [11] COW'D—Filled with fear.

[12] MY BETTER PART OF MAN—My whole being.

[13] JUGGLING—Deceiving. [14] PALTER—Equivocate.

[15] THAT KEEP THE WORD OF PROMISE TO OUR EAR, AND BREAK IT TO OUR HOPE—That tell us what sounds all right but does not turn out as they lead us to hope.

[16] PAINTED UPON A POLE—Macduff says: "Yield and be put on exhibition in a cage over which suspended from a pole will be a painted cloth bearing 'Here you may see the tyrant.'"

[17] TRY THE LAST—Try the last resort.

Siward. Some must go off;[18] and yet, by these I see,[19]
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.
Malcolm. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.
Ross. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:
He only liv'd but till he was a man;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd[20]
In the unshrinking station[21] where he fought,
But like a man he died.
Siward. Then he is dead?
Ross. Ay, and brought off the field: your cause of sorrow
Must not be measur'd by his worth, for then
It hath no end.
Siward. Had he his hurts before?[22]
Ross. Ay, on the front.
Siward. Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.
Malcolm. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.
Siward. He's worth no more:
They say he parted[23] well, and paid his score;
And so God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter MACDUFF, *with* MACBETH'S *head*[24]

Macduff. Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where stands
Th' usurper's cursed head: the time[25] is free.

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[18] GO OFF—Die.

[19] BY THESE I SEE—Those killed, who were evidently few.

[20] HIS PROWESS CONFIRM'D—His prowess confirmed the fact that he had reached manhood.

[21] IN THE UNSHRINKING STATION—Without shrinking from the place where he fought.

[22] BEFORE—On the front.

[23] PARTED—Departed. This incident comes from Holinshed.

[24] WITH MACBETH'S HEAD—According to Holinshed, Macduff after "cutting his head from his shoulders, he set it upon a pole."

[25] TIME—Age.

I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,[26]
That speak my salutation in their minds;[27]
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:
Hail, King of Scotland!
All. Hail, King of Scotland! [*Flourish*
Malcolm. We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves,[28]
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honour nam'd. What's more to do,[29]
Which would be planted newly with the time,
As calling home our exil'd friends abroad
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny;
Producing forth[30] the cruel ministers[31]
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self[32] and violent hands
Took off her life; this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace,
We will perform in measure, time, and place:
So, thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.
[*Flourish. Exeunt*

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[26] COMPASS'D WITH THY KINGDOM'S PEARL—Surrounded by thy kingdom's pearls, that is, the thanes, who encircle him as the pearls in a crown encircle the head of a king.

[27] THAT SPEAK MY SALUTATION IN THEIR MINDS—Who already regard you, as I shall salute you, that is, as king of Scotland.

[28] RECKON WITH YOUR SEVERAL LOVES—Cast up the account of each of you who has been a friend (in order to see what will make us even with you).

[29] WHAT'S MORE TO DO—What other things remain to be done, that is, those which should be done by the new order, such as calling home our friends exiled abroad, etc.

[30] PRODUCING FORTH—Bringing to justice.

[31] MINISTERS—Agents, those employed by Macbeth to do his murders.

[32] SELF—Own.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

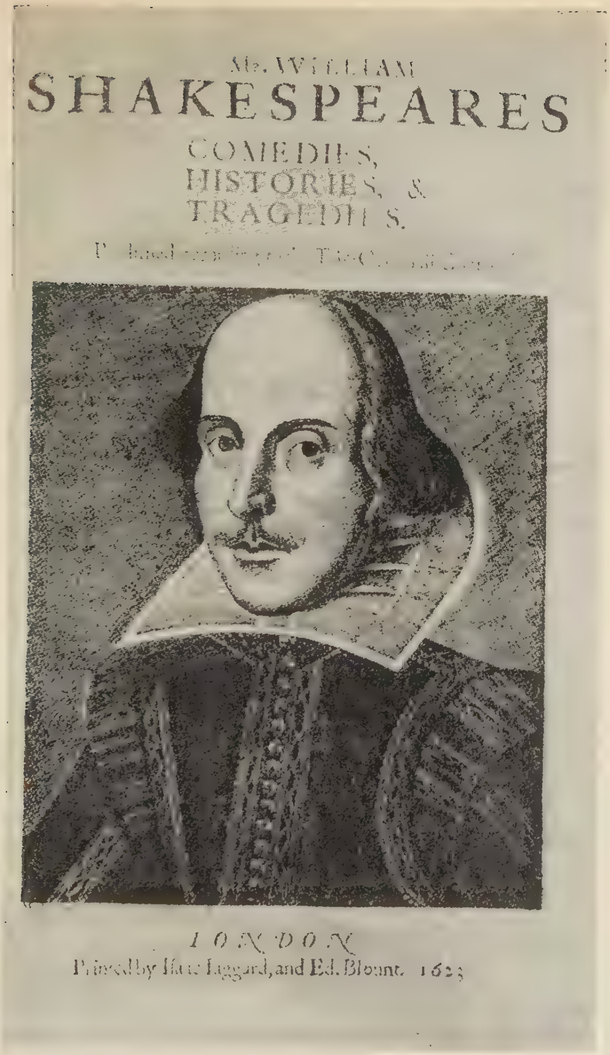
(April 23, 1564—April 23, 1616)

A more extended account of the life of Shakespeare will be found in *PROSE AND POETRY, Eleventh Year.* The biographical sketch there given presents the "life" generally accepted by those who have carefully examined all extant references, direct and indirect, to Shakespeare. But no extended life of the poet can be written without considerable conjecture. One writer puts it as follows: "No biography of Shakespeare . . ., which deserved any confidence, has ever been constructed without a large infusion of the tell-tale words 'apparently,' 'probably,' 'there can be little doubt'; and no small infusion of the still more tell-tale 'perhaps,' 'it would be natural,' 'according to what was usual at the time' and so forth." The reason for this is that the well-documented facts about Shakespeare are relatively few.

There is no record of his birth. The first documented reference to him is in the Parish Register of Stratford which records his baptism on April 26, 1564. There is no further record until November 27, 1582. Under this date a marriage license between *William Shaxpere* and *Anna Whately* was entered in the Episcopal Register of the Diocese of Worcester. In the same Register there was entered 28 November 1582 a marriage bond between *Willm Shagspere* and *Anne Hathwey.* These entries are followed by one in the Parish Register of Stratford, in 1583, recording the baptism of a daughter Susanna and one in February, 1585, recording the birth of the twins, Hamnet and Judith.

The next undisputed reference of any consequence which betrays Shakespeare's whereabouts is his name affixed to the dedicatory letter to *Venus and Adonis* entered in the Stationers' Register in London, 18 April 1593. The references supposed to point to Shakespeare's being in London in 1588 and 1592 are discussed in the section entitled *Shakespeare's Plays* in this volume. The traditions and stories upon which all accounts of his boyhood and youth are based are of comparative late appearance. The deer-stealing episode for example was not heard of until nearly a century after his death; and Aubrey, who may be called Shakespeare's first biographer, gathered his facts from the memory of old men in Stratford after 1660.

After 1593 references to Shakespeare become more numerous in the public documents and in the works of other writers of the time, but they are, nevertheless, few and far between. The greater number of documented references are entries of plays in the Stationers' Register. In addition to these are occasional records which refer to places of residence



Mr. WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARES
COMEDIES,
HISTORIES, &
TRAGEDIES.

LONDON
Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

Portrait of Shakespeare from the *Folio of 1623.*

in London, now and then a reference to his connection with the Lord Chamberlain's men or the King's Men, and a number having to do with the acquisition or ownership of property, from which something as to his financial success can be inferred. The allusions to Shakespeare in the works of his contemporaries are invariably commendatory and give evidence of the high regard in which both the man and his works were held.

The exact date of his retirement to Stratford is not known, nor can certain reasons be given why he returned to Stratford. It is believed that he retired possibly as early as 1611, but his connection with the theatre did not end until after 1613. The circumstances of his death, which tradition says occurred on his fifty-second birthday, are likewise far from clear. The last record in the Parish Register of Stratford is the entry, 25 April 1616, of the burial of "Will Shakespeare gent."

THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE

Some time after 1585 Shakespeare left his native Stratford and went up to London to begin his great career. There is some evidence to indicate that he was in London in 1588, and some which tends to show that by 1592 he had been there long enough to have established something of a reputation as a playwright. In a book entitled *Greenes Groatsworth of Witte, bought with a million of Repentance,* published in 1592, there is an envious reference supposedly to Shakespeare. Greene was a writer and dramatist, one of the "University Wits," a term applied to a group of writers, so called because they were university men. These "Wits" seem to have viewed the writings of such of their contemporaries as could not boast a university degree with that petty and arrogant contempt which it is the ecstasy of those who have been exposed to the liberalizing influences of the higher learning to entertain for those who have not. The "Wits," and Greene in particular, seem to have been much disturbed by the success of the "unlearned sots" who possessed but "a little country grammar knowledge." The passage in the *Groatsworth of Witte* which is commonly taken as referring to Shakespeare reads as follows: "There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide,* supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum,* is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrie." The probability that the "Shake-scene" of this passage is Shakespeare is reënforced by the fact that the expression *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide* occurs in Shakespeare's *King Henry VI,* Part III, except that the line in the play reads: *Tigers heart wrapt in a woman's hide.*

There are various traditions relative to Shakespeare's first employment in London, but that he soon became identified with the theatre seems sure. John Aubrey (1626–1697), an antiquary to whom we are indebted for some scraps of tradition relative to Shakespeare, says, "This William being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, I guesse, about 18; and was an actor at one of the play-houses, and did act exceeding well." It is significant, perhaps, that Greene's alteration of the line from Shakespeare's play changes *woman's* to *Players*—an indication that Shakespeare was known in 1592 as actor as well as dramatist. Greene, it will be noted, also dubs "Shake-scene" a *Johannes Factotum,* or Jack-of-all-trades; and it is quite possible that the term was not chosen at random, for Shakespeare was at this time not only actor but an adapter of old plays, and according to one piece of questionable testimony, a sharer in the old Blackfriars playhouse—a combination which gives point to Greene's epithet.

Whatever the facts, he must have soon discovered his gift for writing plays which would "act." Aubrey says, "He began early to make essayes [attempts] at dramatique poetry, which at that time was very lowe [not flourishing]; and his playes tooke well." This statement squares with the facts as far as we know them. His motive in his "essayes at dramatique poetry" was that of every practical dramatist. Plays that would draw audiences were in demand, and he wanted to write such plays. It is probably going too far to say that the literary quality of his plays was merely an accident, but it is certain that originality of subject matter was not a thing which ever troubled him very much. As Kipling says of Homer, "what he thought he would require, he went and took," and this is what without doubt irritated the "University Wits" whose fulminations against "those puppits . . . that speak from our mouths, those anticks garnisht in our colors" indicate that they regarded Shakespeare as little better than a thief. It is very likely, before he attempted the first play attributed to his independent authorship, that he had rewritten many an old play for the actors with whom he was associated.

Shakespeare's London residence covered a period of about twenty years. During this time, he wrote thirty-seven plays. Of this number twenty-one were never published until after his death. There are a number of reasons why so many of Shakespeare's plays never came into print during his lifetime. In the first place, plays do not seem to have been generally regarded as "literature" in those days, but the chief reason is a very practical one. The companies of actors who owned the plays regarded it as injurious to their interests and profit to have their plays published. In the case of each of the sixteen plays which did appear in print during the life of Shakespeare there were special circumstances to account for the fact. In a number of instances these plays were "stolen, and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors."

The first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays was published in 1623. This known as the *First Folio* * or the *Folio of 1623.* This first collection of the plays was under the editorship of John Heminges and Henri Condell, actors long associated with Shakespeare at the *Globe,* and men for whom he evidently entertained an affection, for both were remembered in his will with bequests, for the purchase of rings. "These Playes," they wrote in their preface, "have had their triall alreadie, and stood out all Appeales." "Reade him . . .," they wrote; "and againe, and againe: And then if you do not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him."

The dating of Shakespeare's plays has been productive of an infinite amount of dispute, nor is his life known intimately enough to enable us to trace the relationship between particular plays and those vicissitudes of life which must be reflected in them. The evidence bearing on the date of composition in the case of any given play is either (1) external or (2) internal. (1) Any item of evidence which does not come from the text of the play itself is *external.* For example, in the case of *Macbeth,* Dr. Simon Forman, an Elizabethan physician and astrologer, wrote in his diary that he attended a performance of the play "at the glob, 1610, the 20 of Aprill." This is relevant to show that the play was composed before 1610. (2) Any item of evidence which comes from the text itself is of the *internal* variety. In the Porter Scene (Act II, Scene 3) the term "equivocator" is by some thought to refer to Henry Garnet, who was tried in March 1606, for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot. If the allusion is to Henry Garnet, this item of evidence tends to show that the play was written after March, 1606. On the whole, external evidence is better than internal, simply because conjecture and opinion must play a larger part in the process by which the conclusions based on the latter are reached.

Every scrap of evidence bearing on the dates of the plays has been scrutinized and debated and weighed until there is now substantial agreement as to the dates of most of the plays. There is an excellent piece of external evidence which tells us the titles of Shakespeare's early plays—those which, in the main, belong to what might be called his period of apprenticeship. In 1598 Francis Meres, an author and divine, published a book called *Palladis Tamia*, or *Wit's Treasury*, in which occurred the following passage: "As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines, so *Shakespeare* among ye English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witness his *Gētlemē of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love labors lost*, his *Love labors wonne* [*All's Well That Ends Well*], his *Midsummers night dreame*, & his *Merchant of Venice:* for Tragedy, *his Richard the 2, Richard the 3, Henry the 4, King John, Titus Andronicus,* and his *Romeo and Iuliet*." Here is mention of twelve plays all written before 1598. There is, of course, a natural curiosity as to which was Shakespeare's first play. This is a question which cannot be answered with certainty. *Love's Labour's Lost* has generally been given this position, but a good case has also been made out for *The Comedy of Errors*.

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* The term "Folio" is a printer's designation for a book the pages of which are made by folding a sheet of paper about 13″ x 17″ once, to make four pages.

The plays assigned to the period of Shakespeare's apprenticeship are: (1) The comedies, *Love's Labour's Lost, Comedy of Errors, Two Gentlemen of Verona;* (2) The history or chronicle plays, *1 Henry VI, 2 Henry VI, 3 Henry VI, Richard III, King John;* (3) The tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet, Titus Andronicus,* all assigned to the years 1590–1593. In these plays the character of the verse, the management of the plot, the handling of character, and the workmanship generally, all indicate the beginner. In all of them some critics have professed to find distinct traces of other dramatists, which may indicate nothing more in many cases than that Shakespeare began, as many a writer has, by playing the "sedulous ape" to his predecessors.

The years 1594–1600 are the years of the great comedies: *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Taming of the Shrew, Merchant of Venice, Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It,* and *Twelfth Night*. To these years also belong the chronicle plays, *Richard II, 1 Henry IV, 2 Henry IV,* and *Henry V*. During this period, Shakespeare was rapidly bringing his great abilities to maturity. The student will note in the list given above plays which he has read or seen. Most of them are still popular and presented in our theatres. In *Henry IV,* Shakespeare created one of his best known characters, Sir John Falstaff, whose famous line "The better part of valour is discretion" is known by thousands who are quite ignorant of its origin. In *Henry V*, he has presented in the person of Henry V what many critics feel represents the kind of man whom he admired. With this play, *Henry VIII* excepted, he completed his history or chronicle plays. The intense patriotism of Elizabeth's reign made these plays tremendously popular. They have been referred to as constituting "a kind of National Epic," and it is probably true that many a one, as it was said of the Duke of Marlborough, knows no English history but that learned from Shakespeare. It is generally regarded as significant that no tragedies were written in these years. Shakespeare's star was in the ascendant. Success had come and the elation which accompanies the realization of one's powers before he had hardly attained to middle life.

The years 1601–1609 saw the writing of the great tragedies: *Julius Caesar* (now held as written by 1599), *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Timon of Athens, Anthony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus.* The comedies of these years are *Troilus and Cressida, All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Pericles.* Efforts have been made to trace some relationship between the fact that Shakespeare now turned to tragedy and the circumstances of his life, but here lack of detailed knowledge as to his life makes such inferences highly speculative. Such plays as *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear* and *Macbeth,* which are the greatest of his tragedies, may mean nothing more than that he had now reached the years that "bring the philosophic mind." That the darker aspects of human character now engaged his attention is obvious, but this does not necessarily indicate that he had suffered some great disappointment or disillusionment.

In 1610 and 1611 Shakespeare turned his hand to a new type of play, the romantic comedy, and wrote in these years *Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale,* and *The Tempest.* His last play *Henry VIII* was done in 1612 or 1613 in collaboration with the dramatist John Fletcher. It was during the performance of this play that the *Globe* took fire and burned to the ground.

"Shakespeare," says Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his Preface to the plays, "is above all writers—the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirrour of manners and of life. . . . He has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the readers think that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion."

SHAKESPEARE'S LONDON AND SHAKESPEARE'S RELATION TO HIS AGE

The reign of Elizabeth (1558–1603) may be said to have witnessed England's coming of age. In her day, those changes which had been going on in every department of life transforming medieval into modern England since the accession (1485) of her grandfather Henry VII, the first of the Tudors, reached their culmination. By 1603, the monarchy was firmly established and the authority of the central government made itself felt in every corner of the realm. The religious question, which had so often threatened disruption, had been settled. The great power of

Spain had been met and humbled, and England had emerged a world power. Explorers and merchant adventurers were sending their ships to the far corners of the earth, and the foundations of England's great colonial empire were being laid. Commerce and manufacture were receiving promotion and encouragement. Agriculture was being studied and improved. The great middle class was coming into a position of economic and political power. The standard of living generally was rising, and people as a whole were enjoying more of the material comforts of life. The cultivation of learning which had gone on during the sixteenth century was now rewarded by an abundant harvest in letters and learning. In everything there was manifest a new, vigorous, adventuresome and progressive spirit.

Perhaps the thing which strikes one as most significant when he reads the history of the period is the new spirit. Explaining its origin is a long story. Here it is sufficient to say that in various ways it grew out of the many-sided curiosity and activities of the Renaissance. As the best intelligence and the imagination of the Middle Ages had been preoccupied with the world to come, so now they were directed to the world here and now, with unbounded enthusiasm and vigor born of new delight in living and of a new confidence in the ability of man to master the universe. In countless writings of the age this confidence finds expression. Shakespeare speaks it in *Hamlet*. "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties, in form and moving! how express and admirable in action! how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!" *Infinite in faculties! Like an angel in apprehension! Like a god!* Such are the very words. Extravagant hyperbole, perhaps, but valid enough as evidence on the temper of the age.

This was the spirit which was behind the making of the modern world. It animated cold intellectual natures like that of Sir Francis Bacon who declared, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province." It was behind the new science, the new geography and the new astronomy of the time. It pushed Harvey on to the discovery of the circulation of the blood, as it pushed Hawkins and Drake and Frobisher on to the discovery of new lands beyond the seas. It stirred men like Holinshed to the rediscovery of England's glorious past, and fired others to the celebration of the spacious days of their own time. In Shakespeare's plays as a whole it is reflected in the exuberant delight in life revealed in the comedies, in the renaissance of English history exhibited in the chronicle plays, and in the revelation of human character made in the great tragedies. It is, however, with Shakespeare as a reflector of the manifestations of this new spirit in the daily life of his time that we are here most concerned. He was in this particular, too, a child of his age. We shall find him not the mouthpiece of the most advanced thought of his time in medicine, in astronomy, and in science generally; it is rather the echoes of these matters, as imperfectly understood by the public, which we hear from the mouths of his characters, in whom, as ever among people at large, old beliefs, ideas, and superstitions linger beside the new. And as among people at large every fundamental change in life is first and most conspicuously reflected in superficial things—in manners, customs, dress, and deportment—so it was in Elizabethan England, and nowhere are these superficial aspects of life better reflected than in the dramas of Shakespeare. It makes little difference when or where a play is laid; it is saturated with Shakespeare's England. The rabble in the opening scene of *Julius Cæsar* is not a Roman mob, but a rout of English artisans abroad "without the sign" of their professions. In the same play Cæsar wears a doublet rather than a toga, he is placed in a coffin for burial, Antony speaks from a pulpit, and the conspirators pluck down shutters such as tradesmen in Shakespeare's day closed over their windows when they shut up shop.

Aubrey tells us that Shakespeare "did gather humors of men dayly where ever" he came. This scrap of tradition illustrates his method. He took the story for *Much Ado About Nothing* from older writers, but he took the characters from his own observation of life. Dogberry, the constable in *Much Ado,* is an officious, self-important, small-town peace-officer, whom the poet "happened to take at Grendon in Bucks" where he lay over night on the road from London to Stratford. It was, however, the teeming, colorful life of the city of London which furnished him his broadest field for observation of those customs, manners, and vagaries of his age which are reflected in the plays.

In Shakespeare's day, London, including the city proper within the walls and the outlying towns, was a community of about 200,000 inhabitants. It still retained its medieval aspect. The towers and steeples of numerous churches and great religious houses dominated its skyline. The wall about the city on the land side was intact, and at each entrance stood a huge tower-like structure or "gate." Two of these, Newgate and Ludgate, were used as prisons. The streets, for the most part, were narrow, unpaved and without sidewalks. Through the middle of the street for drainage ran a channel which served also as a sewer, for it was the custom to throw refuse, garbage, and other waste into the street. Here in these narrow streets where the sun had little opportunity to reach this filth accumulated to be churned up and splashed by passing wagons and coaches onto passers-by. The houses, with their projecting upper stories, stood close-built along the streets, with gardens and "orchards" in the rear. The shopkeeper's place of business was on the ground floor of his residence, and his sign was often suspended over the street above. Some attempt to keep the streets lighted at night was made by requiring householders to hang out lanterns at stated intervals, but the law seems to have been more honored in the breach than in the observance. The chief north and south thoroughfare across the city ran from London Bridge to Bishopsgate. This was the way one took to the first playhouse, *The Theatre,* erected in 1576 in the fields north of Bishopsgate. Later, when the *Globe* and other playhouses were built in Southwark across the Thames, one might take this same street in the opposite direction across the Bridge. One of the chief thoroughfares east and west was the Thames itself. In fact, it would seem that the river was much preferred to the streets, for it is said that in Shakespeare's day there were 40,000 men on the rolls of the Watermen's Company, 8,000 of whom were in service, and that there were 2,000 small boats in and about London. The call for summoning a boat was *Eastward Hoe!* or *Westward Hoe!* The watermen were a rough lot, notorious for their strong language. Shakespeare, who "did gather humours of men dayly," lived for a time on the Bankside in London and must often have crossed in the boat of some hot-tongued member of this numerous fraternity whose billingsgate has perhaps found an immortal niche in some of the poet's less serious scenes.

Conspicuous among the buildings of London were the Tower, St. Paul's Cathedral, the houses of great noblemen, such as Essex House, and the Bridge.

The Tower of London, which still stands, is not infrequently mentioned by Shakespeare. In his day, the uses to which the Tower were put are thus given by the chronicler Stow: "This tower is a Citadell, to defende or command the Citie: a royal place for assemblies, and treaties. A Prison of Estate, for the most dangerous offenders: the onely place of coyange for all England at this time: the armorie for warlike provision: the Treasurie of the ornaments and Jewels of the crowne, and general conserver of the most Recordes of the King's Courts of iustice at Westminster." Here also many famous prisoners "of Estate" were beheaded, including the mother of Queen Elizabeth, Anne Boleyn. In Shakespeare's time, the Tower housed a menagerie where one might see lions, a tiger, a wolf, a lynx and a porcupine, and there is evidence that Shakespeare had observed the lions carefully.

St. Paul's Cathedral was the greatest in England, and one of the glories of London. In Elizabethan times, St. Paul's was the common meeting place of all London. In one corner of its spacious churchyard stood Paul's Cross, a kind of open-air pulpit, mounted on steps of stone from which sermons were preached and government proclamations were made public. There can be little doubt that when Brutus in *Julius Cæsar* went up into the "public pulpit" to give reasons for the assassination of Cæsar, Shakespeare's audience thought of the Roman Forum as something like St. Paul's Churchyard and of the "public pulpit" as another Paul's Cross. Built up against the walls of the cathedral itself were the booths or stalls of a number of booksellers and stationers, for Paul's churchyard was the home of the book trade in Shakespeare's day. This accounts for the advertisements which one often sees on the pages of the books of the period, such as the following: "Printed by John Wolfe for T. N. and are to be sold over against the great South doore of Paules." The great middle aisle of the cathedral itself was known commonly as "Paul's Walk." It would seem as if all men of much consequence in London found occasion to resort to Paul's Walk daily. "It was the fashion of those times," says a writer in 1658, "for the principal gentry, lords, courtiers, and men of all professions, not merely mechanicks, to meet in St. Paul's church by eleven, and walk in the middle isle till twelve, and after dinner from three to six; during which time some discoursed of business, others of news." From this account it would seem that the great motive which led men to Paul's was the desire to get the news of the day. But great numbers thronged the Walk for other and less worthy reasons. At the foot of one of the great pillars of the nave lawyers met their clients, at another usurers met their victims, and at another might be found tailors exhibiting their fine stuffs. At the base of another gathered masterless men—serving men without places, who here set up their bills for service. "Here also ale and beer, baskets of bread, fish, flesh, and fruit were sold, and mules and horses were led, until the scandal became so great that in 1554 the Mayor and Common Council prohibited such 'unreverent' practices."

The third architectural glory of the city was London Bridge, connecting the city proper and Southwark. It was a huge masonry bridge of more than forty arches. Throughout its entire length houses were built on it, arched over its narrow roadway. At the southern end was a tower gate on which in Shakespeare's day were displayed, affixed to the ends of pikes, the heads of traitors as a warning to all who might meditate the overthrow of the monarchy.

The prosperity which followed in the wake of the long peace and the commercial development of Elizabeth's reign was reflected in a variety of ways in the life of the times. The Puritans viewed with increasing alarm the numerous extravagances to which increasing wealth gave rise; and it is to one of them, Phillip Stubbes, who recorded his observations in a book entitled *The Anatomie of Abuses*, that we are indebted for a vivid, if somewhat prejudiced, picture of the foibles and iniquities of Elizabethan England. Stubbes saw "a strong kind of people, audacious, puissant, and heroicall, of great magnanimity, valiauncie, and prowes . . . in all humanitie inferior to none under the sunne" become utterly corrupt, wicked, and perverse. To him it was a mad world, speedily to be devoured by "three devouring cankers; namely, daintie fare, gorgious buildings, and sumptuous apparel." He testifies to a "desperat desire of men to get money"—a desire apparently confined to no particular class. Landowners grew richer by inclosures, lawyers by sleights, the merchants by counterfeit balances, and the "artificers and occupiers, even all in general" by exorbitant prices. "That," he continues, "which might have been bought here tofore for twentie Shillynges is now worth twentie pound," and "this immoderate thirst of golde and money bryngeth an infinite number to shamefull ende." The lot of the poor seems to have been hard indeed. Harrison in his *Description of Elizabethan England* says, "There is no commonwealth at this day in Europe where there is so great store of poor people," and his enumeration shows that the economic progress of his age was not without its darker side.

Among the extravagances of the time noted by every writer was that of dress. In this respect men were if anything worse than women. Fully half of Stubbes *Anatomie of Abuses* is given over to outcries against "Silkes, velvettes, satens, damaskes, taffeties, and suche like." Harrison pauses in his *Description* of Britain to cry out, "Oh, how much cost is bestowed nowadays upon our bodies, and how little upon our souls! How many suits of apparel hath the one, and how little furniture hath the other!" Nashe writes, "England, the Players stage of gorgeous attyre, the Ape of all Nations superfluities, the continuall Masquer in outlandish habiliments." In the matter of dress there seems to have been no standard "style"; every man was a law unto himself. Young nobles who visited Italy and the continent, as Nash put it, played the "ape to all Nations superfluities." In *The Merchant of Venice* Portia says of Falconbridge, the young baron of England, "How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere." A conspicuous feature of dress was a ruff which the introduction of starch, which Stubbes called the "devil's liquor," caused to grow greater and greater, until it was forbidden by law to wear one which measured more than nine inches from the neck to the edge. Jewelry was worn in profusion by both sexes. Harrison writes, "Some lustie courtiers also and gentlmen of courage doo weare either rings of gold, stones, or pearle in their eares." Pomades and perfumes were generously used, and ladies of fashion painted their faces, dyed their hair, and wore vast quantities of artificial hair. Mirrors were fixed in the handles of fans, and sometimes in the plumed velvet hats worn by men. All classes seem to have been affected by the desire to dress extravagantly. Stubbes complained that "it is impossible to know who is noble, who is worshipful, who is a gentleman, who is not, because all persons dress indiscriminately in silkes, velvettes, satens, damaskes, taffeties and suche like notwithstanding that they be both base by birth, and serville by calling, and this I count a great confusion and a general disorder, God be merciful unto us."

Stubbes' description of hair dressing has a most modern sound. The barbers, says he, "have invented such strange fashions and monstrous manners of cuttings, trimmings, shavings, and washings that you would wonder to see. They have one manner of cut called the French cut, another the Spanish cut; one the Dutch cut, another the Italian; one the new cut, another the old; one of the bravado fashion, another of the mean fashion; one a gentleman's cut, another the common cut; one cut of the court, another of the country, with infinite the like varieties, which I overpass."

This new prosperity and something of this same extravagance and love of display exhibited in dress and the adornment of the person was to be observed also in what we call the material comforts. It was noticeable in architecture, in Stubbes' "gorgious buildings," and in house furnishings and appointments. Harrison writes, "There are old men yet dwelling in the village where I remain which have noted three things to be marvellously altered in England within their sound remembrance, and other three things too much increased. One is the multitude of chimneys lately erected, whereas in their young days there was not above two or three, if so many, in most uplandish towns of the realm—but each made his fire against a reredos in the hall, where he dined and dressed his meat. The second is the great . . . amendment of lodging; for, said they, our fathers, yea and we ourselves also, have lain full oft upon straw pallets, on rough mats covered only with a sheet, under coverlets made of dogswain or hopharlots . . ., and a good round log [!] under their heads instead of a pillow. . . . The third thing they tell of is the exchange of vessel, as of treen [wooden] platters into pewter, and wooden spoons into silver and tin." Such were the extravagances in the "uplandish towns!" But among the nobility and the rich merchants, the changes were in proportion. In noblemen's houses it was not "rare to see abundance of arras, rich hangings of tapestry, silver vessels—and much other plate." In the houses of knights, gentlemen, merchantmen, and some other wealthy citizens might be seen "great provision of tapestry, Turkey work, pewter, brass, fine linen, and thereto costly cupboard of plate." To us at this distant date, most of these extravagances seem but necessities, especially the chimney, but to the men of that day, like Harrison, it seemed as if people were going far beyond their means. Well down into Elizabeth's reign the usual floor covering in the houses of the great was a layer of rushes "ocassionally removed, but so imperfectly that the bottom layer is left undisturbed, sometimes for twenty years." When Harrison says that "the furniture of our houses . . . is grown in manner even to passing delicacy" he refers probably to hangings and plate in particular, for furniture in the sense in which we understand it was still crude when he wrote in the early days of Elizabeth. Upholstered furniture does not seem to have been much in use before 1600. Beds, as we understand them, were not common. It would seem, therefore, that people spent their money at first rather for the things which caught the eye and made display.

In manners and behaviour the "new freedom" was especially to be remarked. Preachers and writers, like Stubbes and Nashe, were constantly crying out against the lax morality of the day. Taverns were numerous and well patronized. Extravagance in eating and drinking was general. Tobacco smoking, which strangely enough Shakespeare does not mention, was quite the thing. "The English," says a German visitor, "are constantly smoking the Nicotian weed." Street frays and broils were frequent. To pick a quarrel was the mark of a man of spirit, and the swashbuckling gallant was often a trouble maker. Elaborate swearing seems to have been a fashion. Gambling, dicing, and card-playing were common. Bull-baiting, bear-baiting, and cock-fighting were popular amusements. And the ever increasing attendance upon plays gave the authorities no end of trouble, for "sundry great disorders and inconveniences" were "found to ensue to this city by the inordinate haunting of great multitudes of people, specially youths, to plays, interludes, and shows: namely, occasion of frays and quarrels; . . . the publishing of unchaste, uncomly, and unshamefaced speeches and doings; withdrawing of the Queen's Majesty's subjects from divine service on Sundays . . .; unthrifty waste of the money of the poor and fond [foolish] persons . . .; uttering of popular, busy, and seditious matters; and many other corruptions of youth."

There is to be observed too in the Elizabethan age a certain carelessness of human life and a callousness toward suffering which sometimes shocks a more squeamish generation. The average man seems to have been quick to take offense and quick to use sword, knife, or rapier. The dramatist Ben Jonson killed a well-known actor who had ridiculed him from the stage. Sir Philip Sidney threatened to plunge his dagger into his father's secretary for having read letters Sir Philip wrote his parent. Dueling was not uncommon. Plaguing the insane at Bethlehem ("Bedlam") was a diversion, for the belief was that such a practice was annoying the devil of which the lunatic was possessed. And here we should remember that Shylock, with whom we are inclined to sympathize, got no sympathy from an Elizabethan to whom Shylock's misfortunes were rather a source of laughter than a cause for pity.

In nothing does Shakespeare more reveal the fact that he is an Elizabethan than in his numerous allusions to the sports, games, and amusements of his age. He goes again and again to hunting, to hawking and to riding for figures of speech, and allusions to coursing with the hounds, to fowling, to angling, to tennis, to bowling, to quoits, to leaping and other gymnastic exercises are common. Dancing, which is often mentioned, was popular in his day. In fact, Will Kemp, a celebrated comedian of Shakespeare's company, is chiefly remembered for having won the dancing "marathon" of his day, having performed a "Nine Daies Wonder" by dancing the Morrice all the way from London to Norwich. Football also comes in for mention in Shakespeare. In *King Lear* one character calls another "you Base foot-ball player," which as used here seems to have something of the meaning of our term "roughneck." According to Stubbes, the game in those days was a strenuous one. "I protest unto you," he writes, "it may rather be called a friendly kind of fight, than a play or recreation; a bloody and murdering practice, than a fellowly sport or pastime. For doth not every one lie in wait for his adversary, seeking to overthrow him and to pick him on his nose, though it be upon hard stones, in ditch or dale, in valley or hill, so he have him down. And he that can serve the most of this fashion, he is counted the only fellow, and who but he? So that by this means, sometimes their necks are broken, sometimes their backs, sometimes their legs, sometimes their arms. . . ." Here again we strike a modern note!

Like every period of transition, the Elizabethan Age presented many striking contrasts. Old ideas were still strong, especially in what we call the realm of science. The general run of people believed in witches, goblins, and fairies. Astrology still had many followers. Comets and eclipses were regarded as omens. The alchemist as yet had not been superseded by the chemist. Knowledge of animals, other than those seen in domesticity, was in the main what it had been throughout the Middle Ages. Such fabulous creatures as unicorn and phoenix still lived in popular imagination. Such a thing as sanitation was unheard of. The plague, or "death," took its toll of thousands. "Unicorn's horn scraped small" and powdered "mummy" were regarded as sovereign remedies, and are mentioned in the prescriptions of the time. In such matters, the allusions in Shakespeare, on the whole, reflect the popular ideas.

To describe with accuracy, completeness and just proportion the age in which Shakespeare lived would make a long story. The emphasis in this sketch has been rather upon the striking and amusing superficial aspects of the time than upon the great constructive changes which were taking place. Reading of the frivolities and extravagances at Court should not obscure the fact that Elizabeth was every inch a queen and one of the very greatest of England's sovereigns. And it should not be forgotten or overlooked that even though Shakespeare reflects the superficialities of his time, he embodies in his characters those great qualities of mind, spirit, and soul which are represented in his age in such men as Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh.

ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHAKESPEAREAN AND MODERN DRAMA *

SHAKESPEARE has now been dead over three hundred years. Yet, ask the average well-read person to name a great play written since the days of Shakespeare, and he is likely to find the question somewhat disturbing. Of course, answering such a question involves the necessity of defining the word "great" as applied to drama. Without attempting such a definition, we may, however, point out some of the elements which enter into it. First of all, no drama can be accounted great which will not stand the test of the theatre; it must "act." The playwright who is its author must be a master of his craft. He must know how to handle his story, how to organize it, and how to present it on the stage of the theatre. "Actability," therefore, may be said to be the *sine qua non* of all great drama. So necessary is this quality that a play which "acts" well may be accounted successful even though it is pretty thin in other respects. But it was not alone in writing plays which would act that Shakespeare was preëminent. He knew, in addition, how to create character, and he possessed literary power unsurpassed by any dramatist before or since.

Although what we may call the fundamental qualities of great drama remain to-day what they were in Shakespeare's time, the drama, nevertheless, has in the three centuries since his death undergone many changes. The more conspicuous of these changes may be roughly classified into two groups: (1) changes in the subject matter or material of the drama, and (2) changes in the technique or handling of it.

The first set of changes may be said to include those which have resulted from changes in the social order and in life generally during the last three hundred years. If the student will but casually review the plays of Shakespeare which he has read in high school, he will note that they reflect a society very different from ours. He will find, for example, that the chief characters in Shakespeare are persons of high station in life. In no case will he find plays built about what we are accustomed to call ordinary men and women. In Shakespeare's day the great mass was of little social consequence, and their affairs were deemed hardly worthy the attention of either drama or literature. If next the student will turn to the one-act plays in this volume and run his eye over the various lists of *Characters,* he will note that instead of dealing exclusively with great personages such as Antonio, the princely merchant of Venice, Julius Cæsar, the master of Rome, or Macbeth, King of Scotland, the modern and contemporary drama deals for the most part with persons from the ordinary walks of life, such as, George Henderson, county attorney, Mrs. Peters, and Mrs. Hale in *Trifles.*

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* The student will find it helpful to review *The Elizabethan Theatre* in *PROSE AND POETRY, Eleventh Year.*

Probably the chief reason for this difference is to be found in the changes in ideas as to the worth and consequence of the individual, or the common man, which have attended the development of democracy throughout the world in the past three centuries.

With these changes in ideas as to the worth and significance of the individual has come a corresponding increase in interest in his affairs. As a consequence we find the situations or stories used by modern playwrights much different from those used by Shakespeare. The stories which Shakespeare worked into his plays were for the most part stories involving unusual circumstances, if not artificial situations, as in *The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *As You Like It,* or they were stories of great actions, as in *Julius Cæsar* and in what are known as the *chronicle plays* generally. Among modern dramatists there is a strong tendency toward what is sometimes called "naturalism." They show a preference for natural situations taken from life itself as it is actually lived amongst us. This is particularly noticeable in such a play as *Trifles,* which shows us ordinary men and women, such as we know, in what is called a "life situation."

There is, however, to be observed in modern and contemporary drama, a tendency to deal with various social problems, such as divorce and prison reform, and to make the drama in such cases a vehicle for conveying to the audience the ideas or point of view of the author on such matters. Such plays sometimes are interesting because they deal with timely subjects, but they often lack the enduring qualities which make a play live. After interest in the particular problem dealt with has died out, all too frequently is it found that the play has died with it.

In the case of Shakespeare, however, it may be said that his plays have lived in spite of the fact that many of the things in them which were of immediate interest to his audience have no attraction for us. In *Macbeth*, for example, the witches and the ghost of Banquo cannot possibly have the effect upon us which they did upon Shakespeare's contemporaries, nor is our interest in the affairs of Scotland sufficient to make the play interesting on that score. Shakespeare's plays reflect a social order quite different from ours, and they are, moreover, in a language which may be said almost to require translation, yet his plays live. They live for one reason, because human nature can be as truly portrayed in a king as in a commoner; and although modern drama may seem more significant to us because it deals with modern conditions of life, yet no dramatist of our day equals Shakespeare as a creator of character and an interpreter of life.

The second set of changes reflected by the modern drama—changes in technique—may be said to be in the main directly or indirectly the result of the development of the theatre itself, although many of them have been strongly reinforced by the tendency toward "naturalism" noted above. These changes can be best understood if the student will begin by noting the chief respects in which the Elizabethan playhouse differed from the modern theatre.

(1) The stage of the Elizabethan theatre was a kind of platform extending out into the *yard* or *pit*. The audience stood on three sides of it, and the "reserved seats" were at each side on the edge of the stage itself.

(2) Theatres like the *Globe* were open at the top and not artificially lighted. Plays could be given only during day-light hours and on pleasant days.

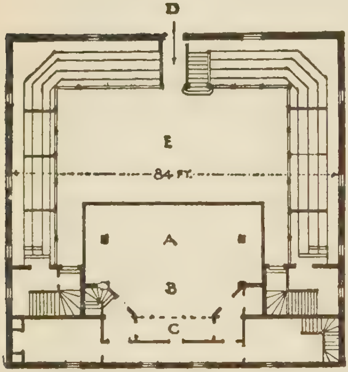
(3) There was little or no scenery. There certainly was nothing like the elaborate "sets" for producing a realistic setting which are seen on our stages. Properties, however, were used.

(4) Mechanical contrivances for producing effects such as lightning, sunrise, snow storms, thunder, etc., were crude and certainly not well adapted to producing realistic imitation.

(5) There was no curtain in our sense of the term.

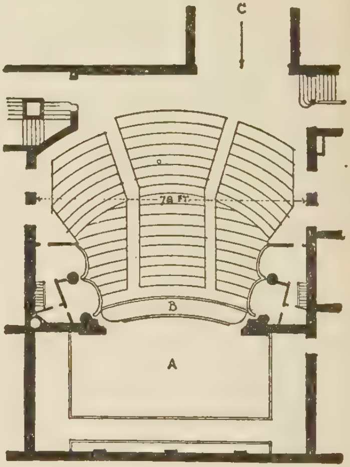
It will be observed that there was a much closer or a more intimate relationship between player and audience in the Elizabethan theatre than there is in the modern playhouse, where the separation of audience from player is complete. The stage which once projected out into the yard, or as we should call it the auditorium, has receded until all that is left is a narrow strip, called the proscenium, between footlights and curtain, while the orchestra pit is all that remains of the *yard* or *pit* where once the groundlings stood. In the modern theatre, the action all takes place on what corresponds to the *inner stage* of the Elizabethan playhouse. (See the ground plan of the *Fortune* theatre.)

The physical separation of audience from player in our theatres has given rise to a feeling that the *soliloquy* and the *aside,* which are found so frequently in Shakespeare, are "unnatural"—that people do not speak thus in real life and that the dramatist ought not to have his characters address the audience directly. This unnaturalness seems never to have troubled either Shakespeare or his audience. In fact, in the Elizabethan theatre it seems not to have been uncommon for the spectators to address remarks to the actors.



THE FORTUNE THEATRE
(London, 1599)

A The Front Stage. *B* The Middle Stage. *C* The Back Stage. *E* The Pit, or Yard. The dotted line shows the curtains which might be drawn to cut off the back stage.



THE EMPIRE THEATRE
(New York, 1930)

A The Stage, showing how it has receded. *B* The Proscenium. This is all that is left of what in the *Fortune Theatre* is designed by *A* and *B*.

Modern dramatists, as a rule, avoid both *soliloquy* and *aside,* as an examination of the one-act plays in this volume will show. They endeavor in a different way to get to their audiences the information which was thus given in the older practice, or they put upon their audiences the responsibility of drawing inferences as to character and motives where the older dramatists were careful to have such things openly conveyed to the audience.

In *Macbeth* there is a still further evidence of the more intimate relationship existing between actor and audience in the closing lines of the last scene, which read:

"So, thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone."

Of these lines says one authority, "There can be little doubt that the actor, in speaking these lines, addressed the audience rather than the *dramatis personae,* and made this utterance of thanks serve as a sort of epilogue." (Manly.)

A line of reasoning similar to that advanced against the *soliloquy* and the *aside* has been brought to bear by some modern dramatists against the *Prologue* and the *Epilogue.* Shakespeare does not himself use these devices frequently, but they will both be found in *King Henry V,* where in the prologue there is a reference to the interior of the theatre as "this wooden O," and in *As You Like It,* there is an extended *Epilogue.*

The fact that plays could be given only in the light of day and that the Elizabethan theatre was lacking in scenery put upon Shakespeare the necessity for constantly reminding his audience of the setting. As M. Jusserand has put it, it was this lack of scenery which forced Shakespeare "to make up for the deficiency . . . by his wonderful descriptions of landscapes, castles, and wild moors. All that poetry would have been lost had he had painted scenery at his disposal." In *Macbeth* there are a number of passages illustrative of this observation, such as, "Upon this blasted heath," and the description of Macbeth's castle which opens Act I, Scene 6, "This castle hath a pleasant seat, etc." But the greatest number of descriptive touches in *Macbeth* betray a necessity for reminding the audience that the action is taking place in darkness. Such is the purpose of such powerfully imaginative passages as: "The moon is down. . . . There's husbandry in heaven; Their candles are all out." —"Now o'er the one half-world Nature seems dead."—"By th' clock 'tis day, And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp."—"Light thickens, and the crow makes wing to th' rooky wood."—"The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day."

In the one-act plays included in this volume, the student will note that in many of them at the beginning there is a *Scene* which prescribes such a realistic setting that descriptive passages in the body of the play are quite unnecessary.

In Act IV, Scene 1, of *Macbeth* there are stage directions calling for some kind of mechanical contrivance. After the Third Apparition, which "rises like the issue of a king," has finished speaking, there is the stage direction [*Descends*]. The Apparition might either have been lowered into the cauldron by ropes manipulated from the *hut* above, or it might have been withdrawn through a trap door in the floor of the stage. The point is that whoever is familiar with the means which the modern stage possesses for producing a realistic effect in such a case will understand how great is the difference between the equipment of the modern stage and the rather crude contrivances of the Elizabethan theatre. In the same scene it is probable that the *Thunder* was made either by rolling a "bullet" in the *hut* overhead or by drummers in the "tiring house," or dressing rooms.

The fact that there was no curtain as we understand it in the Elizabethan playhouse also had its effect upon the technique of the drama—an effect observable in *Macbeth*. One of the problems which the absence of a curtain raised was that of getting characters on and off the stage without making their entrances and exits mechanical and awkward. An examination of the one-act plays will show that in the modern play the curtain frequently rises and invariably falls with characters upon the stage. An examination of the scenes in *Macbeth* will reveal the fact that all characters enter at the beginning of a scene or during it, and that all have made their exits at the end. The stage had to be cleared at the end of each scene. Shakespeare, having no curtain to drop on his characters, certainly had the more difficult task, but so well does he perform it that entrances and exits in all cases seem quite natural. The necessity for clearing the stage at the end of the play, especially in the tragedy, where a body must be removed is met in various ways. In *Julius Cæsar*, Octavius orders the body of Brutus borne from the stage for honorable burial. In *Macbeth*, Macbeth is pursued off the stage and killed. The re-entrance of Macduff with Macbeth's head evidently provided the audience with the satisfaction and thrill of which the failure to have Macbeth killed on the stage had deprived it.

There being no curtain on the Elizabethan stage, the play was a continuous performance. Acts and scenes did not mean as they do with us, a lowering of the curtain and a brief intermission in the play. Here again was a condition with which the dramatist had to reckon. He had so to manage his play that there would be no break in it. Now, there was a kind of curtain on the Elizabethan stage. It was not a drop but apparently a draw curtain. It separated the *inner* from the *middle* stage. This curtain, sometimes called a "traverse," is shown on the ground plan of the *Fortune* by a dotted line. It will also be noted that the doors on each side of the stage open in front of this traverse on to the middle stage. Actors might enter through these, and a scene might go on on the middle or front stage, while properties were being set out on the back stage, the curtain being drawn, in preparation for another scene. It is believed that alternation of full-stage scenes (the back curtain open) with front-stage scenes (the curtain drawn) was an important factor in achieving continuous performance. For example, take Act I of *Macbeth*. The arrangement was probably somewhat as follows:

Scene 1. This was probably a full-stage scene. The witches on the inner stage, and the curtain was drawn as they disappeared.

Scene 2. This was a front-stage scene. The front-stage seems to have been generally used to represent a scene out-of-doors.

Scene 3. A full-stage scene, the witches appearing on the inner stage.

Scene 4. A front-stage scene. The front-stage seems also to have indicated a room, the doors at the sides being used for entrance and exit.

Scene 5. Probably a full-stage scene.

Scene 6. Probably a front-stage scene.

Scene 7. Probably another full-stage scene, the Sewer and Servants passing across the inner stage.

It is probable, too, that change of scene was understood to indicate change of place, and in this connection it should be remembered that Elizabethan audiences were without the information which is given in printed programs in our theatres; and while there is evidence to indicate that on occasion there was displayed a painted cloth bearing the location of the scene, this does not seem to have been the general practice.

There are yet other differences between the plays of Shakespeare and modern drama which may possibly be traced to the nature of Shakespeare's audience. It should be remembered that the bulk of the audience had to stand throughout the performance, and that the groundlings in the pit were a turbulent, restless set anyway. It is probably quite true that the dramatist had to attack them or they would attack him. Here very likely is a further good reason why Shakespeare chose stories of great action and unusual situations. He had to capture the attention of the rabble in the yard, and he gave it witches, ghosts, battle scenes, vigorous action, combats, assassinations, broad humor, sleep-walking scenes, alarums, trumpet-calls, and high-sounding speeches. A good illustration of what was probably simply an attempt to hold his audience with what we sometimes call "mere rhetoric" is to be found in Act I, Scene 2, in the somewhat florid, bombastic language of the Sergeant. In this connection, there is a point of interest in counting the references to blood and the number of times the words "blood" and "bloody" appear in the play. It is likely too that it was in part to relieve the strain on the audience that Shakespeare has his feminine characters disguise as men, as in *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It,* for there were no actresses on the Elizabethan stage. Such parts were taken by boys. In *Macbeth* possibly the nature of the part played by Lady Macbeth did not make this disguise so necessary. There is, moreover, observable throughout Shakespeare's plays an apparent resolve not to leave too much to the audience. In addition to scenic descriptions which informed the audience of the location and time of the action, there was also a kind of tagging of characters, noticeable at several places in *Macbeth* as, "What bloody man is that?"—"Who comes here?"—"See, See, our honor'd hostess."—"Here comes the good Macduff."—"Why, how now, Hecate!"—"See, who comes here." It is entirely possible that this identification of characters was in some measure made necessary by the fact that the actors on the Elizabethan stage did not dress their parts with the minute care as to detail that characterizes the costuming and make-up on the stage of our day. In *Julius Cæsar,* for example, it is certain that the actors played in Elizabethan dress rather than in Roman togas; and although they wore the dress of English nobles, there must have been some difficulty in keeping them straight in the opening scenes. It, therefore, probably was no accident that in the opening scenes of *Julius Cæsar* characters are invariably addressed by name.

There remains to say something of one of the most conspicuous differences between the Shakespearean and the modern drama. Shakespeare's plays are written in verse, specifically in the unrhymed iambic pentameter line. Some of the world's greatest poetry is to be found in the mouths of his characters. The modern drama, on the other hand, is generally not literary. An examination of the one-act plays printed elsewhere in this book will show that the speech of the characters has been devised to square with what the dramatist regards as the way in which such persons would naturally speak. It is invariably prose, it is "conversational," and it is in the peculiar idiom of the character. The modern drama seems to us more natural, more life-like, more realistic. We find interest in it because it deals often with problems in which we are interested and because it portrays types with which we are familiar. But whether or not people three hundred years from to-day will find it as interesting as we find Shakespeare, is a question perhaps best left for them to answer.

THE BACKGROUND OF *MACBETH*

Macbeth is thought to have been written and first staged shortly after the coming of James I to the throne of England. There is a record of its having been played at the *Globe* in 1610, but there is evidence that it had been on the boards for at least four years at this time.

The association of *Macbeth* with King James I demands some attention. For the material which went into the play, Shakespeare went to the history of Scotland, and James was a Scot. He was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley; and at the time of the death of Elizabeth he was James VI of Scotland. Elizabeth was the last of the Tudors, and upon her death James, whose mother was the great-granddaughter of Henry VII, acceded to the throne of England. He was thus the first of the Stuarts to wear the English crown.

In Shakespeare's day the person of the monarch was a matter of great interest among Englishmen; and there must have been a great deal of curiosity about James and about the country from which he came. Shakespeare, who was a practical playwright and, as such, not blind to the necessity of attracting people to the *Globe,* must have recognized what we should call the advertising value of a play dealing with Scottish affairs. And in this connection it should be remembered that in Shakespeare's time the drama was not only a source of entertainment but also one of the chief means through which the mass of people were made aware of the history of the realm, as witness, the *chronicle plays* which are described in the section entitled *Shakespeare's Plays* elsewhere in this book. In our day the natural curiosity as to Scotland which the accession of James no doubt aroused would be satisfied by articles in our magazines and newspapers, but these things did not then exist, and furthermore the great mass was probably unable either to read or to write.

For the facts of his story, Shakespeare went to the *Chronicles of England, Ireland,* and *Scotland,* compiled by Raphael Holinshed. The facts which he took from Holinshed he rearranged to suit his purpose, treating them not as a historian but as a dramatist. (See *A Study of the Drama, in PROSE AND POETRY, Eleventh Year.*) Quotations from the *Chronicles* will be found in the footnotes, especially where such quotations help to understand the play. However, Shakespeare did not use everything he found in Holinshed nor did he take over Holinshed's conception of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. These characters as they stand in the play are Shakespeare's own creations.

But the association of *Macbeth* with James I has what might be called even more intimate aspects. The company of actors to which Shakespeare belonged, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, were upon the accession of James, taken under the patronage of the monarch and were thereafter known as the King's Men. There is reason to believe that *Macbeth* was played at Court in 1606 on the occasion of the visit to

England of the King of Denmark whose sister was Queen Anne. In any event, there are in the play a number of indubitable allusions to James himself—allusions which must have been highly gratifying to that monarch, whose colossal vanity has become a legend of later times and whose pedantry earned him in his own day the title of the "wisest fool in Christendom."

The chief of the allusions is the *"show of eight kings, the last with a glass in his hand."* (See Act IV, Scene 1.) This "eighth . . . who bears a glass which shows me many more; and some I see that twofold balls and treble sceptres carry" is generally regarded as indicating James himself. Shakespeare here seems to have made use of the tradition that Fleance was the founder of the house of Stuart; and the eight kings seen by Macbeth were the Stuart kings of Scotland of which James was the eighth. The "twofold balls and treble sceptres" carried by the kings seen in the glass is thought to be an allusion to a cherished project of James—the political union of England and Scotland. In Act IV, Scene 3, there is what was probably intended as a further compliment to James I in the reference to "touching." All the kings of England from the Confessor down are said to have "touched" to cure the King's evil. James, however, was at first disinclined to the practice, inasmuch as it seemed to some of his Scottish advisers to smack of superstition, but in the end, to please his English subjects, he revived the custom.

There is yet another aspect in which *Macbeth* must have been highly gratifying to James and interesting to the public. Both James and the public, for the most part, believed in the existence of witches. The modern reader is perhaps either annoyed or even disgusted by the witch scenes or he strives to read into them some symbolic meaning. Shakespeare's audience, on the other hand, was without doubt somewhat awed by the witches and it certainly took them literally enough. To an Elizabethan, a witch was not a supernatural being; she was simply an ugly old hag who was in league with the devil from whom she derived certain supernatural powers. And this is all Shakespeare intended his witches to be. They were nothing more than what people of his day believed witches to be—ugly old crones, often bearded, who possessed more than mortal knowledge.

At the time *Macbeth* was being played, London seems to have been agog over witchcraft. In 1584 an Englishman, named Reginald Scot, published a book entitled *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. The word *Discoverie* has the meaning of our word *exposé*. Scot did not believe in witchcraft and the purpose of his book was to expose its absurdities. Shakespeare seems to have been familiar with the book. In fact he made use of some of the popular beliefs, which Scot set out to expose, in Act I, Scene 1. (The footnotes to the play give excerpts from Scot's book.)

James was thoroughly convinced of the existence of witches. He believed that on the occasion of his return from Denmark a great storm which troubled his passage was the work of witches. He sat at the examination of one of these who, in fact, "confessed that at the time when his Maiestie was in Denmarke, she being accompanied (with a great many other witches, to the number of two hundreth) tooke a Cat and christened it, and afterward bound to each parte of that Cat, the cheefest partes of a dead man, and severall ioynts of his bodie, and that in the night following the saide Cat was conveied into the midst of the sea by all theses witches sayling in their riddles or Cives [sieves] . . . and so left the saide Cat right before the Towne of Lieth in Scotland: this doone, there did arise such a tempest in the Sea, as a greater hath not beene seene: which tempest was the cause of the perrishing of a Boate or vessell comming over from the Towne of Brunt Iland to the Towne of Lieth, wherein was sundrye Iewells and rich giftes, which should have been presented to the now Queen of Scotland, at her Maiesties comming to Lieth.

"Againe it is confessed, that the said christened Cat was the cause that the Kinges Maiesties Ship at his comming foorth of Denmarke, had a contrary winde to the rest of his Ships, then being in his companye, which thing was most strange and true, as the Kinges Maiestie acknowledgeth, for when the rest of the Shippes had a faire and good winde, then was the winde contrarye and altogither against his Maiestie: and further the saide witche declared, that his Maiestie had never come safelye from the Sea, if his faith had not prevailed above their ententions."

It is not difficult to understand how the witch scenes in *Macbeth* might have struck James as among the most remarkable things in the play. There is a tradition that James "was pleased, with his own hand, to write an amicable letter to Mr. Shakespeare," and one wonders if it was *Macbeth* which put James into this "amicable" state of mind.

ON THE READING AND STUDY OF *MACBETH*

I *Macbeth* Is a Tragedy

A tragedy, in the Shakespearean sense at least, is a play in which the chief character, or hero, is defeated in the thing which he wishes to accomplish or gain, and is killed. In outward aspect there is nothing in this definition to distinguish the true tragedy from the mere *tragedy of blood,* or from the *melodrama,* yet there is a sure distinction between them. First, in the tragedy of blood, in the melodrama, and in the mere "thriller" the interest of the audience is held by events, sensational in themselves, which thrill, startle, or excite. Everyone knows movies of this type, filled with exciting and spectacular train-wrecks, airplane crashes, and hair-raising situations. In the tragedy proper our interest is not so much in the happenings as such, however startling they may be, as in the significance of the events in the lives of the persons concerned. We find ourselves absorbed in the characters of the persons of the drama—watching the effects of their deeds upon their fortunes and upon their souls. Second, in the "thriller" or the "blood and thunder" drama, events occur without much relation to probability and with only the loosest relation to character. In the tragedy, as those who have read *Julius Cæsar* will note, events are not made to happen just for their own sake. (See the section *A Study of the Drama* in *PROSE AND POETRY, Eleventh Year.*) In the true tragedy events are inextricably bound up with character. They issue out of character, with the impression that, given a certain character, the thing which the person does is inevitable. As a result, we find ourselves interested not so much in the act itself as in the reason for the act and in its consequences.

II MELODRAMATIC ELEMENTS IN *Macbeth*

There are, however, a number of incidents in *Macbeth* which were probably intended to provide thrills. The murder of Banquo and of Macduff's son, and the killing of young Siward takes place on the stage. The murder of Duncan, although not done before the audience, is handled in such a way as to make its horror even more pronounced than it would be had the deed been done in the open. Macbeth himself is killed off the stage, but his bleeding head is borne in on a pole by Macduff. There are, moreover, a number of scenes of sound and fury, not to mention the appearance of the Witches and the Apparitions—sights which must have moved Shakespeare's audience more powerfully than they can us who no longer believe in such things. Yet these things do not make *Macbeth* a mere melodrama. They served their purpose no doubt in providing thrills for the groundlings of the *pit* (see *The Elizabethan Audience,* pp. 619–20 in *PROSE AND POETRY, Eleventh Year;* also *Shakespeare's London* in this volume), who delighted in such spectacles, but they are not the things which make the play live, and the best proof of the point is to be drawn from the first murder scene itself. Here, it is not the killing itself which interests us; it is the behavior of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth—it is the murder of Duncan as seen through the souls of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth which the dramatist lays bare before us. This is what holds us spellbound, while pity and terror contend within us, and we reflect upon the awful irreparableness of the deed.

III The Characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth tend to monopolize the reader's interest. Certainly, no other persons of the drama are so well developed or so insistent in their demands upon our attention. Duncan and his sons, Banquo, and Macduff seem to be in the play only because the action demands other characters. But Macbeth and Lady Macbeth rise above the action, and at times it is possible to become so interested in watching the results of events in them that we almost forget the cause.

At the outset it is necessary that the reader get if possible the conception of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth which Shakespeare had when he conceived the play. In the first place, we may note that all of Shakespeare's great characters are persons of unusual qualities. They are invariably great personages, like Cæsar and Brutus, and they have great and remarkable personalities. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are no exceptions. They are not the "deep-dyed" villains of a blood-and-thunder melodrama, nor petty cut-throats such as the police gather in for vile and miserable killings. There is nothing vulgar or ordinary about either of them, and whatever the emotions with which we witness their great crimes, we are not disgusted with them, nor can we view them with contempt. To arrive at the conception of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth which Shakespeare evidently intended, the student should read the first Act carefully, noting whatever has a bearing on their characters. Questions designed to help him in study and discussion will be found in another section.

IV *Macbeth* Written to Be Acted

The student should remember that *Macbeth* was written to be acted. Drama is more than dialogue. It includes the acting demanded by the character interpretation and by the situation, the stage setting and scenery, the lighting effects, and everything that is included under the head of *stage business*—the roll of thunder, alarums, the tramp of approaching soldiers, the commotion of battle scenes, and the like. All of these things are synthesized, or united, to produce the effect which we feel when we witness the production of any scene. A play need not be a great piece of literature, but where it is, as in the case of *Macbeth,* the effect of the language is to heighten and make more vivid the effect produced by these other elements. To get the most, therefore, from reading a play, it is necessary to visualize the performance and to hear it in imagination as well. To help the reader in this process of reconstructing, or realizing, the play, a number of suggestions are given below.

V DRAMATIC CONSTRUCTION

The student needs also to have in mind as he reads some knowledge of dramatic construction.

The most important of the constitutive elements according to Aristotle is the *plot,* that is, the organization of the incidents of the story. "Plot, dramatically speaking," says Professor Baker, "is the story so moulded by the dramatist as to gain for him in the theatre the emotional response he desires. In order to create and maintain interest, he gives his story, as seems to him wise, simple or complex structure; and discerning elements in it of suspense, surprise, and climax, he reveals them to just the extent necessary for his purposes."

Seeing or reading a play is an emotional experience. If we examine the construction of the play we can discover how the playwright by the organization of the incidents of the story produces and heightens emotional effects. "As a Shakespearean tragedy," says Professor Bradley, "represents a conflict which terminates in a catastrophe, any such tragedy may roughly be divided into three parts. The first of these sets forth or expounds the situation, or state of affairs, out of which the conflict arises; and it may, therefore, be called the Exposition. The second deals with the definite beginning, the growth and vicissitudes of the conflict. It forms accordingly the bulk of the play, comprising the Second, Third and Fourth Acts, and usually a part of the First and a part of Fifth. The final section of the tragedy shows the issue of the conflict in a catastrophe."

Often the divisions of the plot are designated as follows:

(1) The Introduction—The part which gives the situation out of which the conflict rises, and furnishes the reader or beholder with whatever information he needs in order to understand the play.

(2) The Rising Action—The part in which the conflict is developed and increases in intensity and interest. The fortunes of the chief character are in the ascendant. The rising action

continues in *Macbeth* even beyond the *crisis*, which is reached with the success of the chief character in the murder of Duncan, to the turning point of the play which comes with the announcement that Fleance has escaped.

(3) The Falling Action—The part in which the tide of circumstance flows against the chief character, and it is apparent that his fortunes are on the decline.

(4) The Catastrophe—The definite defeat of the chief character. In *Macbeth* the catastrophe comes with the death of the chief character, Macbeth. This ends the conflict.

(5) The Conclusion—There is in *Macbeth* a brief conclusion after the catastrophe, which brings the play to a close without abruptness.

In the organization and management of the incidents of the play, the dramatist endeavors to keep the interest of his audience by so placing incidents that he creates *suspense* and *climax.* A good illustration of suspense is to be seen in the assassination scene (Act II, Scene 2) where the audience is suddenly aroused by Macbeth's "Who's there? What, ho!" to the possibility that "they have awak'd" (Duncan and the grooms). This is followed very quickly by a climax—the appearance of Macbeth, his hands covered with the blood of Duncan, whose shaken voice announces, "I have done the deed," and then the scene goes on to another point of suspense created by the knocking at the gate. The climax in any situation, scene, or act is the point of greatest intensity. It will be noted that within a scene as in this one, there may seem to be a series or concatenation of climaxes. The so-called climax of the play itself is similarly the point of greatest intensity. It may, but it does not always, coincide with the crisis, or with the turning point.

The conflict in a drama, to which allusion has been made, is the struggle between the chief character and the forces opposing him in the achievement of his desires. It is sometimes called the soul of the drama, for it is on this contention that interest centers. There is always an outward, visible conflict between characters or groups of characters, and there is in great drama, as in *Macbeth*, an inward struggle between contending forces in the chief character himself.

In the representation of the conflict, Shakespeare employs a number of methods to produce and to heighten the emotional effect of incidents and scenes. He makes frequent use of *contrast,* alternating exciting incidents and scenes with those which are mild and unexciting. The effect of a mild scene following a tense one is to furnish *relief,* or to let down the tension, and by contrast to make the tense scene more effective. The student will find a number of instances of this in *Macbeth.* Occasionally relief is accompanied by a humorous touch, as in the incident of the drunken Porter, who imagines himself devil-porter at the gate of hell; and no sooner do we set ourselves to laugh than the grim truth of the situation strikes us, making the relief itself reinforce the effect of the preceding scene. After the crisis and, more especially after the turning point, when interest is likely to lag, will be found scenes and incidents which stir emotions not touched in the first part of the play, as the scene between Lady Macduff and her son, or again there may be, as in the Fifth Act, a succession of battle scenes, with their alarms and commotion—scenes which, to judge from the frequency in Shakespeare's plays, must have had a strong appeal for his audience.

VI The Play as Literature

Whatever the effects produced by the management of scenes and incidents, or by acting and stage business, it should be remembered that *Macbeth* is a great piece of literature. This is the reason why a mere reading of the play can move one so powerfully. Although seeing the play or reading it with a knowledge of the theatre, increases one's appreciation of it, it is nevertheless true that the great appeal of *Macbeth* is in a large measure independent of these things. Scenes like the witch scenes or even the drunken porter scene perhaps require to be seen, for it is difficult for the average reader to feel the effect of them, but the great scenes of the play, such as Scenes 5 and 6 of Act I, which portray the intensity of Lady Macbeth's passion, her fierce energy and her all-compelling will, or Scenes 1 and 2 of Act II, which show Macbeth quite unmanned by terrors of the mind, may be said to *compel* the imagination of the reader and to communicate to him the emotion of the speaker, causing him to identify himself imaginatively with the character and to enter imaginatively into the situation. It is here that the great creative imagination of Shakespeare as a literary artist is manifest.

The student should hear and he should learn himself how to read the great utterances of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth aloud. No commentary on any scene can be substituted for a good reading of it. And it should always be borne in mind that the purpose of all foot-notes and other editorial material is to help the student in making an approach to the text itself. After all, it is what Shakespeare wrote which is important, and it is that which, rightly understood and properly read, opens the gates of imagination for the reader.

THE PLAY BY ACTS AND SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1.

In producing this scene how would you set the stage to create a "desert place"? What effects do the stage directions *Thunder and lightning* call for? Should the stage be well lighted? Should the witches be distinctly seen by the audience? How would you have them attired? How should they speak? What action would you suggest to accompany their dialogue? What general effect would you aim to produce in this scene?

What information does the scene convey? What is the mood of the scene? What kind of play does it lead you to expect? Does it arouse curiosity? About what? Do you believe that the scene was more effective in Shakespeare's day than it can possibly be today? On this question see *The Background of Macbeth* and *Shakespeare's London.*

Scene 2.

The Gentleman's Magazine for March, 1889, gives the following description of the stage setting used by Charles J. Kean at the Princess Theatre, London: "The scene was discovered in night and silence, a couple of semi-savage armed kerns were on guard, prowling to and fro with stealthy steps. A distant trumpet call was heard, another in reply, another, and yet another; a roll of the drum—an alarum. In an instant the whole camp was alive with kerns and gallowglasses, who circled around the old king and the princes. . . . The Bleeding Sergeant was carried in upon a litter, and the scene was illuminated with the ruddy glare of burning pine-knots." Do you call this a good setting for the scene?

What information does the scene convey? What do you learn from it as to Malcolm's ability as a soldier? What does Duncan's closing speech tell you? Does the scene increase interest in any character?

MACBETH: What inferences as to the character of Macbeth can you draw from this scene? Find instances of direct characterization. Is Macbeth a better soldier than Malcolm? Is there any evidence that Macbeth is a more able man than Duncan? Read here *The Background of Macbeth.*

Scene 3.

What stage setting would you suggest for this scene? What do the stage directions call for? To what does Macbeth refer in his opening remark: "So foul . . . a day I have not seen"? What action on the part of the witches is called for before the entrance of Macbeth? Find lines which tell. What does the scene tell you of the appearance of the witches? How would you have Macbeth differ from Banquo in manner and bearing? Find lines which indicate how the part of Macbeth should be acted, especially after the meeting with the witches.

What information does the scene give? What do the witches promise Macbeth? Banquo? What curiosity does the scene arouse? Are you more interested in the events or in the characters? How would you describe the effect created by this scene?

MACBETH: What is the effect of the prophecy upon Macbeth? Is he afraid of the witches? What is his manner toward them? In what tone does he speak to them? Whose questions, those of Banquo or Macbeth, seem the more like the disinterested inquiries prompted by mere natural curiosity? Which seems the more interested in the prophecies? What is the effect upon Macbeth of the announcement that he has been made thane of Cawdor? Does it make him tend to trust the witches? Find lines which indicate that he does. Does the announcement excite him? Does it excite Banquo? What is Banquo's comment? Does he feel that the witches are to be trusted? Find lines which tell. Does Banquo feel that whatever truth the witches speak they are evil? Does Macbeth feel, as Banquo does, that the witches are evil? Does he feel that they are good? Find lines which tell. Which man seems to have the stronger moral character? What evidence is there that Macbeth has an active imagination? What is the "horrid image" that "doth unfix my hair"? What is the effect of this "horrid image" upon him? Why doesn't the same "horrid image" trouble Banquo? Can Macbeth put evil aside? What does he mean by saying: "Come what come may, time and the hour runs through the roughest day"? Does Macbeth practice any deception in this scene? Do you think Macbeth has been turning over in his mind possible means whereby he might attain the throne before the meeting with the witches? Why? Do you think the witches originate evil ambition in Macbeth or is it there when he meets them?

BANQUO: What characteristics does Banquo have in common with Macbeth? How does he differ from Macbeth? Which do you like the better, Macbeth or Banquo? Can you tell why? Which seems to have the warmer human sympathy and the more fellow-feeling?

Scene 4.

Suggest a setting for this scene. What persons other than those mentioned would be on the stage? What is a *Flourish?* What "stage business" would you suggest for the scene? Is Duncan seated or standing? What action accompanies Duncan's speech to Banquo? Compare Macbeth's bearing and manner with Banquo's. What distinction would you make between them? Which is the more natural? Which is the more reserved and formal? How would you have Macbeth act at hearing Duncan announce that he intended Malcolm to succeed him?

What information does this scene give? Is it a dramatic scene? Does it give opportunity for display? Is it more important for what happens or what it shows with respect to developments in the mind of Macbeth? Does the scene keep your curiosity aroused? How? What is the effect of the contrast between Duncan's opinion (find this) and your own opinion of Macbeth?

MACBETH, DUNCAN, BANQUO: Of the three, Macbeth, Duncan, and Banquo, which seems the more able man and the one best fitted to be king? Why? Compare Duncan's estimate of Macbeth with your own. Do you find any differences? Is Duncan a good judge of men? Why? Which man, Banquo or Macbeth, seems to possess the more likable personality? Why doesn't Duncan embrace Macbeth as he does Banquo? Read the speeches of Macbeth to Duncan. Do they seem sincere? Are they over-drawn? How do you explain Macbeth's eagerness to bear word of Duncan's coming to Lady Macbeth? Does Macbeth wish the death of Duncan? Has he fully resolved to kill him? If not, what holds him back? Is it conscience or "horrible imaginings"? Or lack of favorable opportunity? Do you think Macbeth will go through with it if Lady Macbeth should say *No?* What is Macbeth's great weakness?

Scene 5.

The scene is laid in Macbeth's castle—possibly in the great hall whose walls of heavy masonry are hung with thick tapestries or adorned with trophies of the hunt and of battle. It is a somewhat somber and rather cheerless place. In the foreground there is perhaps a massive table to which Lady Macbeth comes as she reads the letter. But our interest is not so much in the setting as in the characters. This is a famous scene. It has called forth the best efforts of some of the greatest Shakespearean actresses. The scene is a good illustration of the fact that the average person probably gets more from seeing the play well acted than from reading it. The part of Lady Macbeth is difficult to do, and probably easy to over-do. To get the most from the scene one must try to see the characters and hear them as they speak.

Lady Macbeth enters reading the letter. Her face, her manner and her voice betray the excitement which the letter has stirred in her. Her words are charged with emotion. What is her facial expression? the expression in her eyes? What emotions play over her face? In what tone of voice does she speak? How does her voice change as she goes on in her speech? Note particularly her reply to the messenger: "Thou art mad to say it." Is this a usual reply? How is the line spoken? What is Lady Macbeth's manner in her next speech? What state of mind does it indicate? Contrast the manner of Macbeth with that of Lady Macbeth. Which is the more intense? What is Macbeth's manner and tone in the speech: "To-morrow, as he purposes"? What is his manner when he speaks: "We will speak further"? Does he act eager? in full accord with his wife?

What is most interesting in this scene? What is the effect of the scene? Do you infer from this scene that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have talked of Macbeth's ambition to be king? Do you think that they have ever spoken of the murder of Duncan?

LADY MACBETH: Read carefully Lady Macbeth's characterization of her husband. Does she thoroughly understand him? Is it the "milk of human kindness" which holds him back from catching "the nearest way"? Is he without the "illness," or unscrupulousness, which should attend ambition? Is it true that he "wouldst wrongly win"? Does her characterization of him seem but partly accurate? How do you account for Macbeth's reserve in this scene? Has he fully resolved to murder Duncan? If not, what holds him back? What is your opinion of Lady Macbeth? Is she merely a "fiend-like" woman? Do you think she has a conscience? Has she more or less conscience than Macbeth? Read the following comment on Lady Macbeth by Stopford Brooke (*On Ten Plays of Shakespeare*). She "was not by nature a bad woman, but a woman who became bad by long cherishing an ambition for the crown. This desire was made much stronger by that which was good in her—by her love for her husband. From the time she receives Macbeth's letter, she is the victim of one of those unbridled impulses whose outburst is the result of inward thoughts and passions directed to one end, increasing during years of silence, and at last reaching the highest point of expansion. In some women, the love of power is supreme, and whose intellect is cold if their passions are hot, such an impulse of passion—of love, or jealousy, of ambition, hatred of fear—is, for the time, their only law.

"The emotion is so intense that, while it lasts, it lifts them above nature, above the natural feeling and restraints of their sex. Such an impulse arises quickly into action, and is quickly exhausted. It came on Lady Macbeth in a moment—on the reception of Macbeth's letter. That voiced the possibility of the hopes being realized over which she had brooded so long, and the wild image of the reality seized on her brain. Then comes the news that Duncan is coming to spend the night, and the fury of her impulse falls upon her. She sees, hears, feels nothing but the death of the king. When Macbeth enters, the impulse is doubled by her love for him, by her consciousness that in his thought he is at one with her."

What is your opinion of this estimate of Lady Macbeth? Does it seem to you consistent with the facts of the scene? Would this "impulse" be strong enough to overcome conscience? Is it true that where a person has for a long time cherished the desire for something that a sudden and unexpected opportunity to obtain the thing may lead to immediate action and cause other considerations to be forgotten for the time? Is such action in accord with the "laws of human nature"? Is Lady Macbeth acting contrary to what you would expect in a woman? Is she forcing herself to act thus? Why? Would you call force of will an outstanding characteristic in her? What characteristics do Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have in common? Where do they differ?

Scene 6.

Where does this scene take place? What time of day is it? What do the stage directions call for? What "stage business" would you suggest for the scene? How does the manner of Lady Macbeth here differ from her manner in the last scene? What action does Duncan's closing speech call for? What is the atmosphere or mood of the scene? Is it less intense than the preceding scene? Does it let down, or furnish "relief" to the intensity of the last scene? How does it increase pity for Duncan? Does it increase feeling against Macbeth and Lady Macbeth? What contrasts does the scene present?

CHARACTERIZATION: Why do you think that Macbeth keeps within? Does Lady Macbeth act her part well? Can she "look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under 't"? Do you think Macbeth would have acted the part as well? Why? What words of Duncan and Banquo indicate that each has an eye for beauty? Have you ever noticed this characteristic in Macbeth? Do you think of Macbeth as a man who has a well-developed sense of the beautiful? What would you think his interests might be?

Scene 7.

This is another great scene. Macbeth has left the banquet table. Now that the meek and gentle Duncan sits at his board, he is unsettled by the prospect of the assassination. He leaves his guests; he must be alone to think, to turn the matter over in his mind. He cannot let the idea of killing Duncan alone, yet he cannot bring himself to it. He has almost decided against it when Lady Macbeth enters. What does Macbeth do while he is thinking aloud in the opening soliloquy? What is Lady Macbeth's manner when she enters? How does Macbeth voice his objections? Is his manner firm and determined? Which shows the greater intensity, Macbeth or Lady Macbeth? How does Lady Macbeth speak the words "We fail"? How does Macbeth's manner change in the closing speeches?

In what are you most interested in this scene? What is there dramatic in it? What elements of contrast heighten the effect of it? What feelings does Lady Macbeth play upon in her speeches to Macbeth?

CHARACTERIZATION: Read the speeches of Macbeth carefully. What reasons does he find against the killing of Duncan? Does he anywhere say that it is morally wrong to do so? What does he seem to fear most? Does he speak like a man who has a strong moral sense, or strong conscience? Do you get the impression, nevertheless, that at bottom it is the moral aspect of the assassination which troubles him? What inference as to Macbeth's character do you draw from his ready acquiescence after Lady Macbeth points out that the guilt may be put upon Duncan's chamberlains? Is Lady Macbeth her natural self in this scene? Does it prove her a cold-blooded fiend? Is she without conscience? How do you account for her action in this scene? In what state of mind is she? What is the effect of Macbeth's lukewarmness on her? Is Lady Macbeth essentially feminine or not? Stopford Brooke, speaking of the differences between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth before and after the assassination, says: "In man emotion rarely exists without thought being exercised upon it. Macbeth discusses reasons, difficulties, consequences, before the murder. But in woman it is not so, whenever passion or intellect is dominant in her." Do you think Brooke is right in this distinction between man and woman? Does this scene seem to indicate that he is right? Read again Lady Macbeth's characterization of Macbeth at the opening of Scene 5. To what extent does Macbeth's manner here bear out her estimate of him? What evidences does the scene give of Lady Macbeth's force of will? Is there any evidence that Macbeth has a high admiration of Lady Macbeth's spirit? What difference in attitude toward the murder of Duncan do you note in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth?

ACT II

Scene 1.

Capell's idea of the setting intended is as follows: "A large court, surrounded all or in part by an open gallery; chambers opening into that gallery; the gallery ascended into by stairs, open likewise; with addition of a college-like gateway, into which opens a porter's lodge, appears to have been the Poet's idea of the place of this great action." What lighting effects are called for? What part in this scene calls for great acting?

What effect is created by the moonless, starless night? By Banquo's uneasiness? by his suddenly asking for his sword? by the reference to Duncan's measureless content? by the mention of the weird sisters? by the reference to the signal bell? by the air-drawn dagger smeared with "gouts of blood"? by Macbeth's description of the night? by the ringing of the bell? by the closing lines of Macbeth's speech? How does the scene prepare for the following scene?

CHARACTERIZATION: What contrast between Banquo and Macbeth does the scene present? Do you think that the prophecy of the witches has begun to "work" on Banquo? What instance is there in this scene of Macbeth's imagination? Do you get the impression that Macbeth is forcing himself to do the murder? or is he eager to get Duncan out of the way? Why does Macbeth's imagination trouble him? What is behind his imagination?

Scene 2.

Read the setting for Scene 1. Where is Lady Macbeth? In what attitude is she? Where is Macbeth? Can any noise be heard from the chambers? What lighting effect is called for? Where is Macbeth when he calls "Who's there? What, ho!"? In what tone of voice does he call? Why does Lady Macbeth exclaim, "My husband!"? In what tones do they speak?

Should the murder be done in sight of the audience, or is it more effective as Shakespeare has had it done? What is the effect of Lady Macbeth's listening? Of the noises which she hears? Of Macbeth's call: "Who's there? What, ho!"? Of Macbeth's hallucinations? Of Macbeth's repeated reference to his hands? Do you pity Macbeth? Why? What is the effect of the knocking? What is the most terrible moment in this scene? Is it the murder or the effect of it upon Macbeth and Lady Macbeth which makes this scene intense?

CHARACTERIZATION: What contrasts do Macbeth and Lady Macbeth present in this scene? Which has the firmer self-control? the more active imagination? Is there any evidence that it is the moral hideousness of the deed which troubles Macbeth? What is Lady Macbeth's attitude toward the murder? Is Lady Macbeth without conscience, or has she suppressed her scruples by sheer force of will? Why cannot Macbeth take the same attitude toward the crime that Lady Macbeth does? What evidence is there in this scene that Lady Macbeth's love for her husband and her desire to see him have his ambition are at the bottom of her action? Is there anything in the scene to indicate that Lady Macbeth is not without tenderness in her nature? Is Macbeth a coward? Is he "infirm of purpose"?

Scene 3.

This scene presents a sudden and somewhat startling contrast. While the agonized cry of Macbeth, "Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I wouldst thou couldst!" yet lingers in our ears, the drunken Porter stumbles from his lodge and goes with wavering gait to answer the knocking. As he fumbles at the chains and bolts, he pretends in his befuddled humor to be porter at the gate of hell!

Is there any humor in the episode? What irony is there in the porter's pretending? Does the episode relieve the intensity or not? Does the porter incident create an illusion of the passage of time? What is the effect of the disturbance in nature recounted by Lennox? What is the effect of Macbeth's announcement that he has killed the grooms? Does it surprise you? Why? What is the effect of Macbeth's extravagant language? Does he talk too much? What is the effect of Lady Macbeth's swoon?

CHARACTERIZATION: Speaking of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth after the murder, Stopford Brooke says, "The next day their ideas are entirely changed. Macbeth, having exhausted all his objections, all his fears, and having irreparably committed his murder is absolutely changed from the trembling, reasoning, white-hearted personage of the murder scene. He is cool, determined, quick in action, ruthless. He sticks at nothing—the murder of the grooms. . . .

"As great a change comes upon Lady Macbeth. The storm of impulse is over. She has slept it away, or it has died in the silent sleeplessness of that dreadful dawn which brought her down to face the terror-stricken crowd and to faint away. She has awakened to the horror of what she has done; and she returns to her natural self —as she was, before the temptation she had cherished rose into fierce action, and transported her beyond herself." Do you agree with this comment? Does it seem to be borne out by the facts of the scene? Is Lady Macbeth's swoon real or pretended? If it is real, how do you account for it? How does Macbeth's manner here contrast with his manner in the preceding scene? What term does Macduff apply to Lady Macbeth in this scene? What example of imagination does the scene give? Read carefully the speech of Macbeth beginning, "Had I but died an hour before this chance." Is this speech such a one as you would expect from Macbeth? Does it excite your sympathy for Macbeth? Is it sincere? Why does Macbeth feel thus?

Scene 4.

Where is this scene evidently laid? Is the setting important? What "stage business" would you suggest? What information does the scene give? Does it give the impression of the passage of time? Does it convey the impression that Macbeth will succeed in the long run? In what character are you most interested?

ACT III

Scene 1.

Suggest a setting and "stage business" for this scene. How does the scene arouse your interest anew?

CHARACTERIZATION: What contrast is there in the action of Macbeth before the murder of Duncan and his action here as he questions Banquo to find out the latter's plans? Does Macbeth see any "air-drawn" dagger here? Does he seem self-possessed? What conclusion do you draw from his matter-of-factness here? What troubles Macbeth now that he is king? Find lines which tell. How does Macbeth's reasoning with the murderers affect your attitude toward him?

What characteristics of Banquo does Macbeth enumerate? Contrast the attitude of Banquo toward Macbeth with that of Macduff toward Macbeth? Does Banquo ever think of the prophecy? Do you think he is being affected by it? How? Do you think Macbeth has any special reason to fear Banquo? Do you think that Banquo is thinking more and more of what the weird sisters promised him?

Scene 2.

Where is this scene laid? What is the effect of it upon your interest?

CHARACTERIZATION: Why, do you think, Lady Macbeth inquires about Banquo? Why does she wish to speak with Macbeth? Is there any evidence that she dislikes being alone? What does the scene tell you of the relationship between the two? Does Macbeth need her longer? Does she seem to possess the energy and vigor which she did in Act I? What has happened to her? Does she seem remorseful? repentant? What does Macbeth mean by saying: "full of scorpions is my mind"? What troubles Macbeth's peace? How has he changed since you last saw the two together? Does Macbeth show any sign of repentance? Is he hesitating and indecisive now? Why? What evidence is there in the scene of womanly qualities in Lady Macbeth?

Scene 3.

Where is the scene laid? What lighting effect does it call for? What effect should the setting aim to produce? Where is Banquo when he first speaks?

How has Macbeth's plan failed? Where in this scene would you place the turning point of the play? It has been suggested that Macbeth is the Third Murderer. What arguments can you find for and against this contention?

Scene 4.

Describe a setting for the scene. What in the scene would make it spectacular? Where is Lady Macbeth seated? Why does Macbeth "mingle with society"? What is his manner? Does he act as though he had something on his mind? Describe his movements. What action accompanies Macbeth's words: "See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks"? Can the audience see the Murderer? Does the audience see any ghost in this scene? What great acting is called for in this scene? What is there dramatic in this scene? Where is the turning point of the play? What information with respect to Macduff does the scene give?

CHARACTERIZATION: Does the sight of Banquo's blood affect Macbeth as did the sight of Duncan's? Why not? Do you feel any pity for Macbeth here? What causes Macbeth's "fit" to come on him again? What does he mean by "my fit"? How does his language to the murderer beginning "Then comes my fit again" differ from his previous speeches? Is it more or less imaginative? Can you explain? What change evidently comes over Macbeth's mood? Contrast the action of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Does Lady Macbeth act as you would expect her to? Of what other occasions does this remind you? Is Macbeth a coward? How has he changed from the Macbeth of Act I? Is he repentant?

Scene 5.

Is this scene necessary? Would the play lose anything if it were left out? What information does it give? Does it increase your interest? Do you think that it had an appeal to Shakespeare's audience which it does not have for a present day audience?

Scene 6.

What kind of humor is found in the speech of Lennox? What information does the scene give? Is it necessary to the plot? Does it increase your interest? Are the characters of interest? In what character does the scene revive your interest? How does it affect your attitude toward Macbeth? What impression does it give as to the ultimate success of the play?

Act IV

Scene 1.

Macready (the famous actor for whose little son Browning wrote *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*) suggested the following opening: "Let the witches be placed in different parts of the cavern. Suppose one at the mouth, intently on the watch; another near the cauldron, covering over the livid flame . . . the third witch on the side opposite the entrance, seated perhaps on a fragment of stone, her arms folded, and rocking to and fro upon the rock, as it were, in impatience. Let not a word be spoken, till the audience have time to study the picture. 'Tis to the point, and they are sure to feel it, if you will allow them. The familiars—the brinded cat, the hedge-pig, and the Harpier—are supposed to be stationed outside the cavern to give notice of the approach of Hecate. The First Witch hears her familiar: 'Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.' The eyes of the other Witches are instantly turned towards her; a pause ensues during which they all remain motionless. The Witch near the cauldron hears her familiar; she starts from her cowering attitude: 'Thrice, and once the hedge-pig whined.' Another pause here. Now at length the Third Witch springs upon her feet: 'Harpier cries'; and then addressing her sisters, and not putting words into Harpier's mouth, which Shakespeare never intended for him: ' 'Tis time, 'tis time.' "

What action on the part of the witches follows this opening? Do you call the suggested opening an effective one? What mood or impression does the opening create? What is the effect on your feelings of the ingredients of the charmed pot? What is Macbeth's manner as he enters the cavern? Is he timid or imperious in bearing and speech? With what facial expression do you imagine the witches watched Macbeth? From where did the apparitions rise?

How does this scene contribute to the plot? Does it give any new information? What dramatic incidents does it present? How does it keep up your interest in Macbeth's affairs? What is the effect of the announcement that Macduff has fled to England?

Characterization: Do you call Macbeth a coward? Of what is he afraid? What does he most desire? Compare Macbeth's attitude toward murder now with his attitude before the murder of Duncan. Is the killing of Macduff's wife and children worse than the killing of Duncan? Is it necessary? What does their murder indicate as to the effect Macbeth's course is having on his character? Is Macbeth lacking in decision? What new trait is coming to the front in Macbeth under the assurance of the witches? Is his "security" breeding over-confidence and recklessness?

Scene 2.

Describe a setting and "stage business" for this scene. Is this scene necessary to the plot? Could it be omitted? What is the effect of it? Does it furnish relief after the preceding scene or does it keep interest keyed up? How does it affect your attitude toward Macbeth? What is the effect on the attention of the warnings by Ross and the Messenger? Would the scene be more effective if Lady Macduff were killed on the stage? Is there any pathos in the scene? any humor?

CHARACTERIZATION: What direct characterization of Macduff occurs in this scene? Do you think him wise in leaving his wife and children? Does Macbeth seem more base than you had supposed him? Is Macduff's son a well-developed character? What characteristics does he exhibit? Do you like him?

Scene 3.

Is the setting important in this scene? Does it contribute anything by way of effect? Is this scene essential to the plot? In what way? What effect does the length of the scene have? Does it create an impression of the passage of time? Is this an intense or a mild scene? What effect does it have on your interest? Does it hold you in suspense from seeing what you wish to see? Does it make you more eager to see what happens to Macbeth? What is there pathetic in the scene? What is the effect of Macduff's remark: "He has no children"?

CHARACTERIZATION: When did Malcolm last appear in the play? Do you have a very definite idea of him? How does he compare in force of character, soldierly ability, general competence to govern, with Macbeth? with Macduff? Does he impress you as a forceful character? Do you think he would be a match for Macbeth in battle? in personal combat? What direct characterization of Macbeth is given in this scene? Do any of the sins of which he is said to be guilty surprise you? What evidently has been the effect of Macbeth's crimes upon his character? What impression of Macduff does the scene give you? Do you believe that fear for his own life led him to flee from Scotland, leaving his wife and children? Why does Malcolm talk of revenge when he hears of the murder of Macduff's wife and children? Why doesn't Macduff talk as Malcolm does? Are Macduff's actions on hearing of his loss true to life?

Act V

Scene 1.

How should the setting be made to contribute to the effect of this scene? What lighting effect is called for? What is the manner of the Doctor and the Gentlewoman? In what tones do they talk? What is Lady Macbeth's manner? What actions accompany her various speeches? What change has taken place in her face? Does Lady Macbeth speak in the same confident, forceful manner which characterized her speeches in Acts I and II? What feeling does the scene create in you? How does it affect your feeling toward Lady Macbeth? What is the most horrible moment in the scene?

Characterization: Speaking of the changes which take place in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the murder of Duncan, Stopford Brooke says, "As great a change comes upon Lady Macbeth. The storm of impulse is over. She has slept it away, or it has died in the silent sleeplessness of that dreadful dawn which brought her down to face the terror-stricken crowd, and to faint away.

"She has awakened to the horror of what she has done; and she returns to her natural self—as she was before the temptation she had cherished rose into fierce action, and transported her beyond herself. . . .

"Her conscience awakes—'What's done cannot be undone.' It is only the awakened conscience which dwells in the irreparable past. Macbeth does not. He seeks only to secure the future. She lives in the ghastliness of the past." Does this strike you as an accurate explanation of what has gone on in Lady Macbeth?

Scene 2.

Describe a setting and "stage business" for this scene. Note the stage directions. What information does the scene give you? What does it tell you of Macbeth's actions? What contrast is there between this and the preceding scene? Do you wonder what Macbeth will do? What is the effect of the brevity of the scene? (Note that the remaining scenes are short and generally full of action. What is the effect?) Are you getting desirous to see the play end? Why? What do you want to happen?

Macbeth: What does the scene tell you of Macbeth's state of mind?

Scene 3.

What is Macbeth's manner? Does it show agitation or is he calm and self-possessed? How does the pale face of the servant affect him? How does this scene advance the plot? Does it increase your interest? Is there anything pathetic in it? Does it stir your pity for Lady Macbeth or not? Why?

CHARACTERIZATION: When did you last see Macbeth and Lady Macbeth together? Do you gather that he has left her much alone since the murder of Duncan? Why has he done so? Has his neglect been intentional? What is his attitude toward her present state? What is it that now animates Macbeth? In what mood or state of mind is he? Why does he put on his armor before it is needed? Has he lost any of his physical courage? of his vigor and energy? Why must he keep doing something? Have you any pity for him? Has your attitude toward either Macbeth or Lady Macbeth changed since the first Act? What are the "thick-coming fancies" which trouble Lady Macbeth? Does Macbeth act as if he were confident in the prophecies? If not, how do you explain it?

Scene 4.

What setting and "stage business" would you suggest for this scene? Would you have the soldiers hew down the boughs on the stage or not? How would you handle this incident?

What incident in the scene rouses your interest? Are you interested in the character Malcolm? What moves you to read on?

Scene 5.

Where is this scene laid? What activity is suggested? What is Macbeth's manner? What is the cry? What is the manner of Macbeth as he comments on the death of Lady Macbeth? What is the manner of the messenger? of Macbeth's reply? In which case does Macbeth show the more feeling?

MACBETH: Why is it that the cry of the women does not cool Macbeth's senses? When was the time that his "senses would have cool'd to hear a night-shriek"? What effect has his course had on his feelings? What is his attitude toward the death of Lady Macbeth? Is his description of life a true description of life in general or only of his life? Why does he call the messenger "Liar and slave"? What is the effect of the announcement on him? Does his mind tell him that his cause is lost? Why does he not commit suicide? or attempt to make his escape? How does he endeavor to keep his spirits up? Does his physical courage remain with him?

Scene 6.

What is the effect of the brevity of this scene? What is there exciting in the scene? Do you want to see a general battle or do you wish to see Macduff meet Macbeth?

Scene 7.

What information with respect to Macbeth's fortunes does the scene give? What is there dramatic in the scene? How does Macbeth's victory in this scene raise your interest? Does it make you more desirous to see him meet Macduff?

Scene 8.

Why does Macbeth say to Macduff, "my soul is too much charg'd with blood of thine already"? Does it indicate that the murder of Lady Macduff and her children has troubled him? Does he really wish to spare Macduff? Does he refuse to fight Macduff because of cowardice? Has his bravery left him at the last, or is there another explanation? Why does he fight in the end? How is suspense created as to the outcome of the fight? How do you suppose the return of Macduff with Macbeth's head affected Shakespeare's audience?

A LIST OF BOOKS FOR REFERENCE AND SUPPLEMENTARY READING

A Life of William Shakespeare, by J. Q. Adams. Houghton Mifflin Company.

An authoritative and interestingly written life which the high school student can read with enjoyment.

A Life of William Shakespeare, by Sir Sidney Lee. The Macmillan Company.

By an outstanding English authority on Shakespeare. This life credits the deer-stealing episode.

Outline Guide to Shakespeare, by Paul Kaufman. The Century Company.

A useful reference book giving a résumé of the facts and inferences about Shakespeare's life and the documentary evidence, synopses of the plays, a digest of Shakespeare's grammar, Shakespeare's pronunciation, etc.

Shakespeare's England. Oxford University Press.

A collection of essays on various aspects of life in Shakespeare's day. This is a rather expensive work, but well within the range of the high school library. The essays are readable and interesting, and touch such topics as, Costume, Home Life, London and the Life of the Town, Actors and Acting, The Playhouse, Sports and Pastimes, Rogues and Vagabonds, The Court, Land Travel, etc. The work should be in every high school library.

Shakespeare's London, by H. T. Stephenson. Henry Holt and Company.

An interesting account of Elizabethan London and Elizabethans.

Shakespeare, The Man and His Stage, by E. A. G. Lamborn and G. B. Harrison. Oxford University Press.

An inexpensive and most readable book, giving a great deal of source material on Shakespeare's Life, his Age, his Theatre, and the Plays.

Shakespearean Playhouses, by J. Q. Adams. Houghton Mifflin Company.

A valuable reference work on the playhouses of Shakespeare's day.

The Shakespearean Stage, by V. E. Albright. Columbia University Press.

Valuable on the original staging of Shakespeare's plays.

Shakespeare: Life and Plays, by George Saintsbury. Volume V, Chapter VIII, Cambridge History of English Literature.

Comment on the difficulty of writing a life of Shakespeare and on each of his plays.

Notes and Lectures on Shakespeare, by S. T. Coleridge. Everyman's Library, E. P. Dutton and Company.

Comment on the interpretation and appreciation of Shakespeare by the author of *The Ancient Mariner*.

Shakespearean Tragedy, by A. C. Bradley. The Macmillan Company.

An outstanding collection of lectures on the substance and construction of Shakespeare's tragedies, with interpretations of *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. Indispensable to the student of *Macbeth*.

Tudor Drama, by C. F. Tucker Brooke. Houghton Mifflin Company.

An interesting account of the development of the drama leading up to Shakespeare.

A Shakespeare Glossary, by C. T. Onions. Oxford University Press.

A necessary and authoritative glossary of words and terms in Shakespeare by one of the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary. Inexpensive.

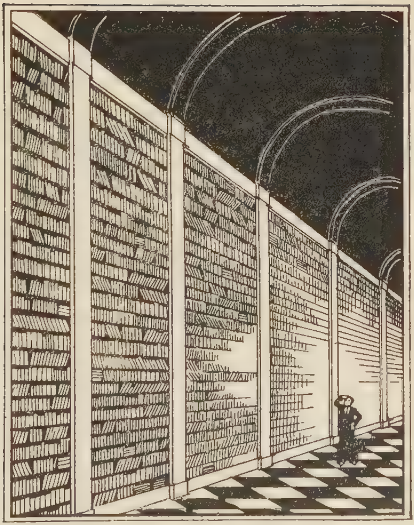
A Shakespearean Grammar, by E. A. Abbott. The Macmillan Company.

The standard work on Shakespeare's grammar.

A Study of the Drama, by Brander Matthews. Houghton Mifflin Company.

A book on dramatic construction and related matters. Easy to read and interesting.

THE STORY OF LITERATURE
ENGLISH AND AMERICAN



SECTION VIII

THE STORY OF LITERATURE

H. Ward McGraw

Introduction 873

PART ONE—ENGLISH LITERATURE

I The Anglo-Saxon Period (Beginnings to 1066) . . . 874
II The Anglo-Norman Period (1066–1360) 882
III The Age of Chaucer (1360–1400) 887
IV The Fifteenth Century (1400–1500) 889
V The Renaissance (1500–1558) 894
VI The Age of Elizabeth (1558–1603) 896
VII Cavalier and Puritan (1603–1660) 900
VIII The Age of Dryden (1660–1700) 903
IX The Age of Pope (1700–1740) 905
X The Age of Johnson (1740–1780) 906
XI The Age of Burns (1780–1800) 909
XII The Age of Wordsworth (1800–1837) 909
XIII The Victorian Era (1837–1901) 913
XIV Contemporary Literature (1901–1930) . . . 923

PART TWO—AMERICAN LITERATURE

Relationship to English Literature 931
I Colonial Writers (1621–1776) 932
II The Revolutionary Period (1776–1800) 935
III First Half of Nineteenth Century (1800–1865) . . 937
IV Last Half of Nineteenth Century (1865–1900) . . 944
V The American Short Story 947
VI The American Humorists 948
VII American Songs and Ballads 950
VIII The American Drama 951
IX Essayists and Miscellaneous Prose Writers . . . 951
X Contemporary Literature (1900–1930) 952

THE STORY OF LITERATURE

H. Ward McGraw

INTRODUCTION

The selections in the Prose and Poetry series cover a wide range both in time and in types. The literature of England from the days of Shakespeare and the literature of America since the Revolution are well represented. Most of the great names and many of the great masterpieces in the literature of the English-speaking people appear on the title pages of these books. Among the types are to be found the epic, the metrical tale, the metrical romance, ballads and miscellaneous narrative poems, most forms of lyric poetry, the novel, the romance, the tale of adventure, the short story, essays, history, the oration, the autobiography, the one-act play, and the Shakespearean drama.

In connection with each selection in the series will be found biographical sketches, background material, and other relevant comment to a far greater extent than it would be possible to include in any short summary of either English or American literature. The student who has read only detached selections, however, is not likely to have formed any idea of the continuity of literature nor to have seen much relationship between it and the development of the race. While it is true that great pieces of literature are the work of individuals and are to be studied as such in light of the peculiar genius of the author, it is also true that every author is the product of his times. To read Shakespeare, one should know something of the Renaissance and to read Burns one should know something of the rise of Democracy. In the sketches of English and American literature here given it will be the purpose to give the main facts in the story and to show as well as space permits the influences which have been at work in the shaping of our literature.

A great many of the authors who appear in the Story of English and American literature have received extended treatment in some one of the books of the Prose and Poetry series. Wherever in the course of the story such an author is mentioned, the student will find following his name in parentheses a Roman numeral as follows: William Cullen Bryant (IX). This means that an extended account of Bryant will be found in Prose and Poetry *Ninth Year*.

PART ONE—ENGLISH LITERATURE

I The Anglo-Saxon Period. From the Beginnings to 1066

The English Conquest. The story of English literature begins on the continent of Europe, from which in the fifth century swarmed those fierce conquering tribes, Angles, Saxons, and Jutes whom Tennyson in *The Coming of Arthur* describes as

> a heathen horde,
> Reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood.

The home land of these Anglo-Saxons lay along the coast of the North Sea and in southern Denmark in the vicinity now known as Jutland. Their migration was probably part of that great folk-movement which pressed down from the north and east upon the weakening Roman empire; and their conquest, though stubbornly resisted, seems to have been a thorough-going one. The Britons were either killed or driven farther and farther west until the fury of the onslaught had spent itself, and the survivors found refuge in the fastnesses of Wales, in Cornwall, or in Ireland. At length the conquerors settled upon the lands which they had ravaged, and devoted themselves to husbandry and the arts of peace.

The Anglo-Saxons. These new-comers brought their literature with them, and it is from what has survived that we learn what manner of men they were. Of course, their literature was not what we have in mind when we use that term, for it was still a matter of oral tradition. It consisted largely of tales of heroes and mighty deeds done in battle. The custodians of this literature were called *scops,* who, at the feasts of the warriors, sang or chanted their tales to the accompaniment of the harp. From the surviving fragments of this literature we picture a hardy, warlike, adventuresome people, closely resembling in character the "Viking bold" drawn by the imagination of Longfellow in *The Skeleton in Armor.* They were at home upon the water. The sea was their highway and upon it they set out in their sturdy curve-stemmed ships on voyages of plunder and adventure. They were a somewhat serious, dour, if not gloomy race, quite lacking the fanciful imagination of the Briton, or Celt. There is very little of what might be called love poetry in their literature, and not much that would indicate a delight in nature. This latter fact is not astonishing, for the climate of their homeland, lying as it did along the low misty shores of the North Sea with the dark forests of Germany at its back, was a rigorous one. Winters were cold and long. The struggle for existence was a strenuous one, in which the unkinder aspects of nature were conspicuous; and their imagination peopled the forest, the sea, and the misty moorlands with etens and elves, and monsters and demons. Their religion reflected their warlike propensities. Their heaven, Valhalla, was the Heaven of Heroes, to which the souls of those slain in battle were carried by the

Valkyries, who hovered over the battle-field marking heroes for death. The spirit of this religion was fatalistic. "Wyrd, or Fate," they said, "goeth ever as she must."

Beowulf. The greatest piece of Anglo-Saxon literature which has come down to us in the folk-epic *Beowulf* (bā′ ô-wo͞olf). It was apparently in the process of formation when the Anglo-Saxons came to Britain. It took its present form sometime in the eighth century in northern England, and was put into writing under Christian auspices in some Northumbrian monastery.

Beowulf is the story of a great hero from whom the poem takes its name. He was a warrior, or thane, of Hygelac, a king of the Geats, a tribe dwelling in southern Sweden. Hearing that the mead-hall of Hrothgar, a king of the Spear-Danes who had befriended his father, was being ravaged nightly by a great monster, Grendel, Beowulf set out with his chosen band of "shoulder-companions" to slay the hideous "night-prowler." This he did in single-handed combat, and afterward, pursued Grendel's dam to her lair beneath the sea and there slew her. This done, Beowulf returned to his homeland, bearing the rich gifts given him to his king. There now intervenes in the story a period of fifty years. Upon the death of Hygelac, his son being a boy, Beowulf was offered the throne by the Queen, but he would not take it. He chose rather to uphold the prince, Heardred, with counsel and good will, until the latter was older and able to rule the Geats. Upon the death of Heardred, slain in battle, Beowulf then became king and ruled the people well, defending them from their enemies and dealing justice among them. In his old age, a fire-dragon began to ravish his lands, and Beowulf went forth against him. In this last battle, his companions, save one, the young Wiglaf, deserted him. Though he killed the monster, he himself was slain.

This in barest outline, is the story. It is a story filled with vivid pictures of the primitive life of the Anglo-Saxons. Written in a rough, vigorous chant, its movement echoes the surge and thunder of the sea. But perhaps its most compelling interest is in the character of Beowulf. In him we see many of those qualities which the race has always valued in a man. He is the embodiment of the heroic ideal. His outstanding physical characteristic is strength. The story tells us little of his personal appearance, except that he was of gigantic mould, and so mighty that swords broke from the force of the blow that dealt them. His most conspicuous moral quality was courage, but the story makes it plain that he was no bully. Accompanying his strength was prudence of mind and modesty. Upon loyalty he set a high value. His going to help Hrothgar was due as much to gratitude as to love of adventure. He is lacking in the subtlety and craft of Ulysses. His attack is straightforward, displaying joy in the fight, and no desire for advantage or favor. Although evidencing an ambition for fame, his refusal to take the throne from the young Heardred indicates that his was no selfish ambition. As king, his high sense of duty is conspicuous. As protector of the people, he felt it his obligation alone to fight the dragon, although he went to the fight knowing that it would be his last. In all his actions he displayed a high sense of honor. "Death," he held, "is better to every man than a life of disgrace."

Minor Poems. In addition to *Beowulf* there have survived a number of shorter poems and fragments, giving us glimpses of the Anglo-Saxons and their life. Conspicuous among these is a magnificent lyric poem *The Seafarer* which breathes a passion for the sea that has run through English literature from then until Masefield's cry, "I must down to the seas again." And somewhat later in the period come two great battle poems, *The Battle of Brunanburh* and *The Battle of Maldon*, the latter of which exists in a spirited translation by Tennyson.

The Effect of Christianity. In the latter years of the sixth century Christian missionaries from Rome and from Ireland began to find their way among the Anglo-Saxons, in whose temperament there seems to have been a reflective strain which led them at times to musing on the mystery of life. The characteristic is well illustrated by the account of the conversion of King Edwin of Northumbria:

> Another of the king's councilors spoke thus: "King, this earthly life of ours seems to me, when compared with the time of which we are ignorant, as if we were sitting at a feast with your councilors and chieftains in the winter, and the fire were burning and the hall cheerfully heated, while outside it rained, it snowed, and the wind raged; and as if then there came a sparrow and swiftly flew through the hall, coming in through one door and going out at the other. While he is within the hall he is not buffeted by the wintry storm; but in the twinkling of an eye his respite is ended, and from the winter he goes into the winter again. So the life of man appears for a little time; what went before, and what comes after, we know not. If, therefore, this new teaching brings us anything more certain and more valuable, it seems to me that we ought to follow it."

Such was the appeal which the new religion made. Once adopted, Christianity seems to have spread with a fair degree of rapidity. Monasteries were established throughout the realm, especially in Northumbria, in great number. In these learning was cultivated, and the industry of the monks first reduced to writing those remnants of old Anglo-Saxon literature which have come down to us. Moreover, from these monasteries there came a new literature inspired by the new religion.

Cædmon. The legend of Cædmon sometimes called "The Father of English Song" symbolizes the influence of Christianity. The story has come down to us in the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People,* a Latin work, written by the "venerable Bede," a monk and scholar who died in 735. Cædmon was a cowherd in the monastery of Abbess Hilda at Whitby. "Being sometimes at feasts, when all agreed for glee's sake to sing in turn, he no sooner saw the harp come towards him than he rose from the board and turned homewards. Once when he had done thus, and had gone from the feast to the stable where he had that night charge of the cattle, there appeared to him in his sleep One who said . . . 'Sing, Cædmon, some song for Me.' 'I cannot sing,' he answered; 'for this cause I left the feast and came hither.' He who talked with him answered, 'However that be, you shall sing for Me.' 'What shall I sing?' rejoined Cædmon. 'The beginning of created things,' replied He." In the morning when Cædmon told his dream to the Abbess, she concluded that "heavenly grace had been conferred on him by the Lord." A passage in the Holy Writ was read to Cædmon and he was bade to put it into poetic form. The next morning he gave it "composed in excellent verse." Cædmon became a monk, and in subsequent years, so the story goes, put the Scriptures into verse. Cædmon's *Hymn,* the first recorded piece of literature, created on English soil is given by Bede:

> Now ought we to praise the prince of heaven's kingdom
> The Maker's might and the thought of His mind
> The work of the Father, since he of all wonders,
> Eternal Lord, the beginning established.
> First did he shape for the sons of mankind
> Heaven as a roof, the holy Creator
> Then the middle-world did the warden of men,
> The eternal prince, after prepare
> As a dwelling for men, the Lord Almighty.*

Other Religious Pieces. The great bulk of Anglo-Saxon literature written after the days of Cædmon was religious in nature. It was the work of either monks or churchmen. In addition to paraphrases in verse of *Genesis, Exodus,* and *Daniel,* at one time attributed to Cædmon, there are a number of religious poems believed to have been written by Cynewulf, a monk who lived in Mercia or Northumbria, and some collections of sermons in prose written near the end of the Anglo-Saxon Period by Aelfric, a monk of Winchester, and by Wulfstan, Archbishop of York.

King Alfred. The probabilities are that much more was written than has survived. In the last half of the eighth century England was again well nigh overwhelmed by another heathen horde. Now came the Danes, who burst upon northern England burning and destroying as they went. The monasteries where literature and learning had flourished were pillaged and the monks killed or dispersed. The Danes pushed southward across the Thames and threatened to overrun all England, but in a great battle at Edington, Alfred, King of the West-Saxons, forced the Danish host to surrender, and rolled back the tide of conquest. The Danes, however, were left in possession of nearly all the territory north of the Thames.

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* From Crawshaw, *The Making of English Literature.*

Alfred had no sooner forced the Danes to a peace than he turned his attention to the education of his people. "Letters and civilization," says the historian Green, "had almost vanished in Great Britain." Alfred gathered scholars and learned men about him at his capital at Winchester, and established a school where "every freeborn youth who possessed the means should 'abide at his book until he can well understand English writing.'" He himself undertook the translation into English of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History,* Boethius' *On the Consolation of Philosophy,* and a *Universal History* by a Spanish monk, Osorius. "Alfred," says Green, "created English literature. Before him, England possessed noble poems in the work of Cædmon and his fellow-singers, and a train of ballads and battle songs. Prose she had none. The mighty roll of the books that fill her libraries begins with the translations of Alfred, and above all with the chronicle of his reign."

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. This is the first great piece of historical writing in English, and it is from this chronicle that we derive a great deal of our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon England. It seems to have been the custom in the monasteries to keep a record of passing events. Alfred caused the chronicle kept at Winchester to be expanded and revised, and this formed the basis for what is known as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which was continued until after the Norman Conquest.

The Anglo-Saxon Language. Present day English bears little resemblance to the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Only occasionally do we come across a word which we recognize, as the following three lines from the beginning of *Beowulf* show:

Hwæt! we Gar-Dena in gear-dagum
þeod-cyninga þrym gefrunon,
hu ðа æþlingas ellen fremedon!

The translation of these lines is as follows: "Lo, we have heard of the glory in days of old of the Spear-Danes, of the kings of the people, how the athelings did deeds of valor!" *

Here we recognize the words "we" and "in," and perhaps the word "hwæt" [what]. Not only was the vocabulary different from that of our tongue, but it was also a far less expressive language than ours. It had fewer words and those for the most part named concrete things such as the sea, night, feast, day, ship, shield, wave, home, etc. In fact, most of the monosyllables in our present day speech come from the Anglo-Saxon. It was lacking in what we call abstract terms, and it was not a language adapted to graceful, fanciful and imaginative writing. It was, moreover, inflected to show conjugation, declension and comparison. Harsh and somewhat guttural sounds seem to have prevailed. But what it lacked in lightness and grace, it made up for in force and vigor. Anglo-Saxon verse had neither rime nor meter as we understand them. In each line, however, there were four distinct beats, two in each half line; and alliteration supplied the place of rime.

Celtic Literature. The influence upon English literature of the Celtic peoples of which there are two branches, the Cymric —Welsh or ancient Britons, and the Gælic—Irish, has been considerable. To the Celtic temperament our literature owes much of that delicate fancy, that romantic imagination, that touch of magic, that keen sensitiveness to beauty of form and color, and that warm emotion which characterize John Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes.*

Matthew Arnold quotes an old Irish poem to point the difference between Saxon and Celt:

> For dullness, the creeping Saxons;
> For beauty and amorousness, the Gaedhils.

The outstanding characteristic of the Saxon genius Arnold tells us is *steadiness with honesty;* that of the Celtic *sentiment* – *always ready to react against the despotism of fact.*

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* Translation by McClelland and Baugh in *Century Types of English Literature.*

During the Anglo-Saxon period, there is little trace of Celtic influence in our literature, for the Saxon conquest was evidently resisted to the death, and probably few Britons submitted to live as the menials of the conquerors. It was not until after the Norman Conquest that the tide of Celtic influence began to flow back over the literature of Britain. The hero of English medieval romance is the Welsh chieftain Arthur. As one writer has put it, "Arthur, the Celt, not Beowulf, the Teuton, is the chosen hero of dreams to the English race."

In more recent years there has been a revival of interest in the Gaelic or Irish literature, which has made available to the general reader the imaginative and fascinating stories of the Tuatha-De-Danann, of King Conchubar and the hero Cuchulain, of the Sons of Usnach, and of Finn and Ossian.

II THE ANGLO-NORMAN PERIOD (1066–1360)

The Norman Conquest. In 1066 England again suffered another invasion which was to have a far-reaching effect on English life and literature. In this year came the Normans under the leadership of their great duke, William the Conqueror, who crossed the Channel with an army at his back to enforce his claim to the throne of England. On the battlefield of Hastings, not far from the place where tradition says the Saxons first set foot on English soil, William met and defeated Harold, "the Last of the Saxons," and made himself master of England.

There now followed the subjugation of the realm. Most of the great estates passed into the hands of William's followers, and the English bishops were supplanted by Norman churchmen. The whole direction of affairs passed to the newcomers. As their influence extended, Norman manners and customs followed; and Norman-French became the language of all persons of social consequence under whose patronage alone, literature in those days could flourish.

The Normans. Originally the Normans were what might be called cousins of the Anglo-Saxons, for they were Norsemen.

They too had come down out the North in their curve-stemmed ships, coasting the shores and making quick forays inland to ravage and plunder. During the early years of the tenth century they effected a settlement in France about the mouth of the Seine in the region which took from them the name of Normandy. Here the people whom they dispossessed were Celts, of the same stock as the Britons, but instead of waging a war of extermination upon them, they intermarried with them and adopted their language and their more civilized manners and customs. The result was that in 1066 when the Normans set out on their conquest of England, they were perhaps the most masterful and the most progressive race in Europe.

Norman and Saxon. The Norman and the Saxon presented a number of contrasts. The latter was conspicuous for qualities which make for endurance. He was conservative, if not somewhat stolid, and resented innovation. He was matter-of-fact and heavy-minded rather than romantic or imaginative. He was likewise stubborn and tenacious, and a strong individualist. The character of Cedric the Saxon in *Ivanhoe* illustrates pretty well the outstanding traits of the race. The Norman, on the other hand, was more progressive and energetic. He was romantic and imaginative, with a more artistic temperament, a keener appreciation of beauty, and a more joyous outlook on life. The Norman conquest was achieved by virtue not of superior bravery but by superior ability. While the Saxon, like Cedric, was content to stand up man to man and fight it out with the brown-bill, the javelin and buckler of his fathers, the Norman brought to the field superior weapons and tactics of war; and the subjugation of the realm was as much due to Norman superiority in architecture as to ability in arms, for the Saxons knew no method of attack which would reduce the strong fortresses their conquerors raised on every hilltop throughout the land. And in the business of government, the Normans manifested a vigor, an efficiency and a degree of executive ability which bewildered the more easy-going Saxons.

The Effect on Literature. As those agencies which fostered the development of literature—the castle hall and the monastery—passed under Norman influence, the change was reflected in the cessation of writing in the Anglo-Saxon, and for nearly a hundred and fifty years after the conquest there was no literature in English worthy the name. When finally it does appear, one of the first things we note is that it is in a language which is much nearer our modern English than the Anglo-Saxon was. As the two races had grown together, they had developed a new tongue. Though it was the English speech which had triumphed, it was a simpler, richer, less cumbersome, and a more expressive language than the Anglo-Saxon, which had lost most of its inflectional endings in the process and been enriched by the addition of many words of Norman-French origin. Two other changes in the literature are also to be noted. First it is no longer predominantly religious, but reflects new interests. We now find nature poetry, love lyrics, the beginnings of patriotic poetry, a book of travels, some satire, and a great number of romances. And in the second place, we find new literary forms especially in poetry which now exhibits rhyme, meter, and a variety of stanza forms. Much of this new poetry is, furthermore, more graceful and more musical.

Two Types of Writing. The great bulk of the writing done during the Anglo-Norman period falls into one of two classes; it is either religious or romantic. In general, it may be said that the religious pieces reflect the more serious English attitude toward life while the romances reflect the French influence. The writings of the first class are serious and didactic in tone; they have for their purpose usually to exhort men to holier living and to instruct in matters of Biblical history, church doctrine, and tradition. These writings for the most part have no great literary merit. They are not of interest today to anyone but the specialist; the general reader finds little in them to hold his attention. Religious emotionalism, however, produced some few pieces of exquisite lyric poetry, for example, the *Love Rune* of Thomas of Halles, a poem which gives an inkling of what was yet to come in the long course of English literature. The metrical romances, a great number of which were written in both French and English, deserve more attention.

The Metrical Romances. During the Middle Ages there grew up on the continent particularly, and in England after the Conquest, a great mass of legend. This legendary material consisted of the Matter of Rome, the Matter of Gaul, and the Matter of Britain. The first of these had to do with the great figures of the ancient world, the second with those of medieval France, particularly Charlemagne, and the third with the great folk-hero of the Britons, King Arthur. It is with the wonderful deeds and exploits of King Arthur and his Knights that the outstanding romances in English have to do. By far the best of these is *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight.*

Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight. This story opens with a description of the Christmas festivities at King Arthur's Court. The spirit of romance is reflected in the description of the great hall with its hangings of rich tapestry and in the character of those who are present. All are in their youth, the ladies are of surpassing fairness and beauty and the knights of great renown and valor. At the height of the festivities there comes riding into the hall on his steed a knight clad all in green, bearing a remarkable challenge. He offers to let any knight of Arthur's Court strike off his head, if the knight accepting the challenge will suffer a blow in return. Sir Gawayne accepts, and strikes off the head of the green knight who calmly takes his head up and rides from the hall. After the festivities of the following Christmas Sir Gawayne in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Grene Knight sets out in search of the latter. After a number of adventures in the course of which the knighthood of Sir Gawayne is proved by a series of temptations he arrives at the Grene Chapel, the appointed rendezvous. Since Sir Gawayne has been true to his vows, the Grene Knight is unable to strike off Sir Gawayne's head. The purpose of the romance is to picture the perfect knight, Sir Gawayne, who has been found faultless in five respects—purity, compassion, fellowship, courtesy, and frankness. This tale was written about 1370.

It reflects in both form and substance the influence of the French and the English. The verse form reminds one more of the old alliterative four-stressed Anglo-Saxon poetry, and the subject matter though highly romantic is nevertheless strongly religious.

Nature Poetry. In both *Sir Gawayne* and in other poems of the period is to be seen a delight in nature not found in the older Anglo-Saxon poetry. Perhaps the best example of this nature interest is the short lyric known as the *Cuckoo Song:*

Sumer is icumen in, lhude sing, cuccu;
Groweþ sed and bloweþ med and springþ þe wude nu;
Sing, cuccu.
Awe bleteþ after lomb, lhouþ after calue cu;
Bulluc sterteþ, bucke uerteþ, murie sing, cuccu.
Cuccu, cuccu,
Well singes þu, cuccu; ne swik þu nauer nu.

Summer is a-coming in, loudly sing, cuckoo;
Groweth seed and bloweth mead and springeth the woodland now;
Sing cuckoo.
Ewe bleateth after lamb, lows after calf the cow;
Bullock starteth, buck darteth, merry sing, cuckoo.
Cuckoo, cuckoo,
Well singest thou, cuckoo; cease thou never now.*

General Characteristics of the Literature of the Period. The *Cuckoo Song* given above illustrates in form and in language as well as in substance the effects of the Conquest. The modern reader will find himself with little study able to make out practically all of the words in this piece. If he will compare it with the first three lines of *Beowulf,* he will note also a difference in form. Here is meter, rhyme, a new stanza form, and a refrain. Furthermore, here is evidence of a delight in life and in the world of nature which is also to be seen in many of the poems of the period. Like most of the poetry of the period it is anonymous and this fact has significance. Literature was still composed to be sung or recited. To those who heard it, especially in the case of the romances, it was the substance or story which was important, rather than the author.

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* Translation from Crawshaw's *The Making of English Literature.*

III The Age of Chaucer (1360–1400)

Geoffrey Chaucer. The first great figure in our literature and the greatest before Spenser is Geoffrey Chaucer, sometimes called the "Father of English Poetry." Chaucer was born in London about 1340. The known facts of his life are few. His father was a wine-merchant. As a boy Chaucer was a page in the household of Elizabeth, the wife of the Duke of Clarence, in whose army he later served in France where he was taken prisoner. Throughout his life he was in the service of the Crown in some capacity. At one time he went on diplomatic business to France and Italy, and he was for a number of years a collector of customs at the port of London. Chaucer's visits to the continent brought him in contact with both French and Italian literature which served to develop his genius. In these literatures he found both material and models, and his first longer poems were written in imitation of pieces he had read in Italian or in French.

The Canterbury Tales. Chaucer's masterpiece is the *Canterbury Tales*. The plan of this work is as follows. Chaucer pretends that in the course of a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury he fell in with a group of pilgrims at the Tabard Inn in Southwark across the Thames from London. In the *Prologue* he gives a description of each of these persons. As a result of a suggestion made by the landlord of the Tabard Inn, who proposed to ride with the company to Canterbury as its guide, each pilgrim to furnish entertainment on the journey was to tell four tales, two during the ride to Canterbury and two during the return. This plan of course was but a device enabling Chaucer to tell a great number of stories. Many of his stories were old tales retold. He did not trouble much about the originality of his subject matter but in his retelling he gave to these stories a new life and vividness which is all his own.

Chaucer's Characteristics. The first thing which strikes one about Chaucer is his vivid realism in description. In the *Prologue* he has left us a picture gallery of the Middle Ages.

His pilgrims come from different social levels and represent different occupations. Here we meet a forester, a farm laborer, a lawyer, a doctor, a merchant, a shipman, a prioress and a knight, to name only a few of them. Each one is drawn true to life. His knight for example is not the shining knight in armor of the medieval romances but such a one as one might have met on the highways and byways of England in Chaucer's time:

> But for to tellen yow of his array,
> His hors weren goode, but he was nat gay.
> Of fustian he wered a gypon
> All bismotered with his habergeoun.
> For he was late y-come from his viage,
> And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

Here Chaucer describes a veteran of many campaigns. It will be noted that "his hors was goode"—a strong, serviceable animal, but that "he was nat gay," that is, gayly clad as were those battle-steeds which romance delights to picture. The knight himself wears a "gypon," or doublet, not of silk or some rich material but of cotton or "fustian," and his doublet is all begrimed or "bismotered" with rust from his ring-mail, or "habergeoun." In the delineation of character Chaucer also excels. Each of his pilgrims is an individual; whereas the knights, for example, one meets in the metrical romances are all very much the same. In a few lines Chaucer shows us the character of his knight:

> And evermoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
> And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
> And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
> He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
> In al his lyf, unto no maner wight.
> He was a verray parfit gentil knyght.

Here we have pictured a soldier who has everywhere won great renown (sovereyn prys). He is valiant (worthy), but he is also discreet and modest (wys) and no swaggerer—his manner (port) is as meek as that of any maid. We note here one of those characteristics which distinguished the hero Beowulf and which is still admired in the English ideal of a gentleman. In all his life, Chaucer's knight had never taken advantage of his prowess to pick a quarrel—he never yet "no vileynye (discourteous talk) sayde . . . unto no maner wight (any man)." "He was a verray parfit gentil (gentle, as in gentleman) knyght." A further characteristic of Chaucer is his sly humor which comes out in his description of the weaknesses and failings of some of his characters, but his humor is only gently satirical, rarely if ever biting or sarcastic.

Chaucer's Effect on the Language. Throughout the Anglo-Norman period there was no single English speech understood by all men. Every author wrote in the dialect of the district in which he lived. Chaucer wrote in the midland dialect spoken in the vicinity of London and the popularity of the *Canterbury Tales* was powerful in making Chaucer's dialect the standard English speech.

Other Writers of the Period. Three other writers of the period deserve mention. One of these is John Wyclif, a religious reformer who ranks as the outstanding prose writer of the period. He is best remembered for his translations from the Bible, the first attempt looking to a translation of the whole Bible into the speech of the people. A second is William Langland, author of a poem which in its day seems to have been very popular, *Vision of William Concerning Piers, the Plowman.* The poem is a protest against selfishness, luxury, covetousness, and many of the evils of the period. The third writer is John Gower, a voluminous writer whose didacticism earned for him the sobriquet conferred upon him by Chaucer of "Moral Gower."

IV THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY (1400–1500)

The Fifteenth Century produced no single writer comparable to Chaucer. Long histories of literature find space for a number of poets whom it is customary to group together as the English

Chaucerians and the Scotch Chaucerians, so called because all of them were more or less indebted to Geoffrey Chaucer for material, models, and inspiration.

Malory's Morte d'Arthur. An outstanding single piece of the period is the *Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory. This is not strictly speaking an original work. It is rather a retelling of the great mass of romantic legend which had grown up about the figure of King Arthur. It is, nevertheless, a work of distinction for Malory had the gift of telling a story in a vivid, moving, and interesting manner. Malory's book is still read with enjoyment. A more extended account of it is to be found in PROSE AND POETRY *Eleventh Year* in connection with Tennyson's *Idylls of the King,* for it was to Malory that Tennyson went for many of the incidents which he has used in his poems.

The Ballads. The fifteenth century saw the development of a great number of short, popular, verse tales, known as ballads. The origin of these ballads has been the matter of a great deal of speculation and investigation. They are all anonymous. Like Topsy they seem to have just "growed up." One theory of their origin is that they originated as the musical accompaniments to folk dances, for they are all intended to be sung.

The English ballads deal for the most part with subjects which appeal to the popular imagination. To use a modern expression, their subjects have what we designate by the term "news value"—deeds of violence resulting from jealousy and love triangles, bride stealing, heroic deeds, battles and individual combats, relationships between men and supernatural beings, and occasionally humorous domestic incidents. A great number of these ballads deal with the prowess and exploits of the famous legendary bandit character, Robin Hood, who is represented as the friend of the poor, and as a kind of agent for effecting social justice. Some of the best known of the ballads are *Sir Patrick Spens, The Nut-Browne Mayde, The Hunting of the Cheviot, Robin Hood and Allan-A-Dale, Bonny Barbara Allen, Hind Horn,* and *The Twa Sisters.*

The Beginnings of the Drama. While the roots of the drama go back before the fifteenth century, that period saw a rapid development in the Mystery and Morality Plays, from which the Shakespearean drama developed. The English drama originated in the church in little dramatic representations intended for the better instruction of the people, inserted in the liturgy, especially at Easter time. From these simple Easter plays developed the Passion Plays of which the famous Passion Play of Oberammergau is a survival. As time went on the tendency was to elaborate these liturgical dramas, and they came to be based not only upon Biblical stories but upon the lives of the Saints. In fact, the earliest play of which there is any record in England is called *The Play of St. Catharine* which was represented at Dunstable early in the twelfth century. Of course these plays were at first written and presented by members of the clergy. About 1250, however, many bishops were inclined to prohibit the clergy from taking part in these plays and to forbid the use of the church for their presentation. While the clergy seem to have continued to assist in the writing of the plays, this action of the bishops opened the door to secular and semi-professional performers. After the plays were put out of the church, they seem to have been given on a platform or rough stage at the church door and later to have been moved into the adjoining fields. Gradually the plays passed under the auspices of the trade guilds.

Mystery and Miracle Plays. The general term by which these plays have come to be known in English literature is Mystery or Miracle Plays. While the French seem to have made some distinction between these two, the terms appear to have been used interchangeably among the English. By the year 1400 in most of the leading English towns such as York, Chester, and Coventry, the guilds had taken over these plays. In York for example there was developed a series of forty-eight plays, constituting what is called a Cycle. In this Cycle an attempt was made to dramatize the Biblical story from the creation of the world to the Resurrection of Christ and the Harrowing of Hell. The various plays, or scenes, were divided up among the different guilds with a naïve appropriateness. In the York Cycle, for example, the creation of the earth was presented by the plasterers' guild, the building of the Ark by the shipwrights, the turning of the water into wine at Cana by the vintners, the Last Supper by the bakers, and at Chester the Harrowing of Hell was presented by the cooks and innkeepers. The plays were performed on holy days, each play on a movable stage or pageant. On Corpus Christi Day, for example, one stood on a street corner and here saw in succession as pageant succeeded pageant the whole series of plays. These pageants were oftentimes elaborately constructed. A sixteenth century churchman describes one as follows: "A high scaffold with two rooms, a higher and a lower, upon four wheels. In the lower they appareled themselves and in the higher room they played." A conspicuous stage property was Hell-Mouth in the form of the head of a great monster with gaping jaws generally supposed to represent Leviathan, or the whale. From Hell-Mouth issued smoke and flame, and into it demons bristling with horse hair and wearing ugly beasts' heads dragged condemned souls. Lists of properties and costumes which have survived show the elaborate preparations which were made in the production of these plays. In one of them the devil is represented as a shaggy beast, horned, clawed, with forked tail, and with pipes of burning gunpowder in his ears and nostrils.

Morality Plays. In the fifteenth century there developed another type of play known as the Morality. The Morality Play differed from the Mystery Play in that it was not based upon a Biblical story. A favorite theme of the Morality Plays was the life of man, which it endeavored to present allegorically. Perhaps the best known of these Moralities and the one which serves to illustrate the characteristics of this type of play is *Everyman* in which the chief character Everyman starts out in life accompanied by a number of friends including Beauty, Strength, Discretion, Five Wits, Friendship, Kindred, and Riches. In the course of life he meets other characters such as Good Works, Repentance, and Mercy. Finally he is summoned by the character Death. His companions such as Kindred, Riches, and Strength now leave him, and Good Deeds alone is willing to go with him on the journey to which Death beckons. In these plays the characters were invariably abstractions, and the purpose of the play was of course to give instruction on the conduct of life.

Interludes. Toward the close of the fifteenth century there developed another type of play much shorter than the Morality Plays, called the Interlude. These Interludes were oftentimes given between the courses of a banquet or on occasions where a short entertainment was desired. They were based frequently upon some life situation. The best known of these Interludes is that known as the *Four P's* in which a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Potycary, and a Pedler vie with one another to see which can tell the greatest lie. The climax comes when the Palmer declares that he has never seen a woman out of patience. The play also embodies some humorous satire for each of the four characters makes himself out to be a rascal.

Contributions to the Drama. A brief review of these remote ancestors, so to speak, of the Shakespearean drama will serve to show that the perfected drama like every other literary form did not spring into being all at once. The Elizabethan drama which was to flower at the end of the sixteenth century owes much to these early forms. Katherine Lee Bates distinguishes eight respects in which the Miracle and Mystery Plays contributed to Elizabethan drama, notably intense vitality, truth to human life, dramatic sense, a blending of comedy with tragedy, and reality in characterization. The chief contribution of the Morality Play was that it gave the dramatist a free hand in constructing a plot, whereas the playwright in the Mystery Play was bound more or less to the story as he found it in the Bible. In the Interludes we find the playwright going to life itself for his material. In the sixteenth century we shall notice further developments in the drama which led up to the drama as we are familiar with it in Shakespeare. (See *The Elizabethan Theatre* in PROSE AND POETRY *Eleventh Year.)*

V The Renaissance (1500–1558)

General Characteristics. The term Renaissance is given to that great period of transition during which the Middle Ages passed away and the modern world came into being. Literally translated, the term means "Rebirth" and has been used to describe the revival of classic learning which took place in Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The revival of learning was, however, only one phase of the great change in life which took place during this period. In every department of life the old was being superseded by the new. Feudalism and all the institutions attendant upon it was passing away. A strong sense of nationalism was growing up, a new system of land holding was supplanting feudal tenure, a new form of wealth based upon trade rather than upon land was coming into being, and towns and cities were springing up. Everywhere were signs of economic progress and a consequent rise in the standard of living. What the revival of learning did was to open up the rich civilizations of the ancient world, stimulate intellectual curiosity and spur men on to attempt to reconstruct the culture and civilization of the ancients.

The Restorers of Learning. The first step, of course, in the revival of learning in England, was to make the literature of the ancient world available to Englishmen. In the closing years of the fifteenth century the study of Greek was begun at Oxford under Linacre. Here and soon at other centers of learning assembled scholars whose attention was directed to the study of the classics of antiquity. The study of such books as the *Republic* of Plato, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer, and the Greek philosophers, poets, and dramatists generally, led to a desire on the part of Englishmen to imitate these works. In this way it came about that the ancient classics gave an impulse to English literature. A good example is the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More which was written in imitation of the *Republic* of Plato.

The Humanists. The first effect of the revival of this ancient learning was to direct the attention of men to the study of the so-called Humanities. As we have seen, the culture of the Middle Ages was religious. The culture of the Greek and Roman world which was now unfolded was, on the contrary, a pagan culture. The *Republic* of Plato, for example, was not concerned so much with the life to come as with the problem of human happiness and better government here on earth, and it was because the great works of the ancients dealt with human relationships that they came to be called the Humanities and the men who encouraged their study came to be known as the Humanists. Chief among these were Sir Thomas More, John Colet, the founder of St. Paul's School, and Roger Ascham, who in 1568 published a work called *The School-Master* in which he advocated among other things, physical education, and reiterated the Greek ideal of a sound mind in a sound body.

The New Poetry. As Englishmen became more aware of their cultural deficiencies they began to turn to the continent, especially to Italy, for models of literary excellence. In the early years of the sixteenth century two Englishmen, Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, began to write in imitation of Italian verse. They introduced into our literature the sonnet. Surrey also attempted a translation of Vergil's *Æneid* in which he used blank verse for the first time that is to be found in our literature. The poetry of Wyatt and Surrey had a tremendous influence on others. There followed now a number of men, notably Thomas Sackville and George Gascoigne who, experimenting with new verse forms, were to show what could be done in English.

Translations of the Bible. One of the results of the Reformation in England was a renewed interest in the Bible which led to attempts to make a new translation of it. The translation which Wyclif had made was in a language which men no longer generally understood. In 1526 William Tyndale made a translation of the Old Testament distinguished for its simplicity, vigor and clarity. So well did Tyndale do his work that the English Bible as we know it today is largely the work of William

Tyndale. In 1535 Tyndale's work was revised by Miles Coverdale and in the years which followed a number of translations were made by scholars and churchmen.

Development of the Drama. The revival of learning of course brought to light the dramatic literature of Rome and Greece. In these dramas, Englishmen had an opportunity to study dramatic construction which was in many respects quite superior to that of the plays with which they were familiar. This led to an attempt to write dramas after the fashion of the ancients, and resulted in what is sometimes called the first English Comedy written about 1550 by a schoolmaster. The title of this is *Ralph Roister Doister,* and it plainly shows classic influence in the construction of the plot although the subject matter is wholly native. In 1561 appeared what is called the first English tragedy, *Gorboduc,* modeled after the Roman dramatist, Seneca, and written in blank verse; and in 1566 came another farcical comedy, *Gammer Gurton's Needle,* written by a bishop.

Contributions to Literature. The early Renaissance period in England may be said to end about the time Elizabeth came to the throne. On the whole, the period was one of experimentation. Most of the poetry of this early period was frankly imitative, and in some cases little more than translation from the Italian or Latin originals. It was a period, however, of preparation necessary to the great productive period which was to follow in the days of Queen Elizabeth.

VI The Age of Elizabeth (1558–1603)

Edmund Spenser (1552–1599). The first great poet of the Elizabethan age, sometimes called "the poets' poet," is Edmund Spenser. Spenser was a product of the new education, having attended the Merchant-Tailors' School before taking his degree from Cambridge University. In him unite the new learning, medieval romance, and English seriousness. His first important poem, *The Shepherd's Calendar,* reflects the influence of the *Idylls* of Theocritus and the *Eclogues* of Vergil. Spenser's greatest work is his allegorical romance, the *Faerie Queene,* which he never finished. The plan of the *Faerie Queene* is as follows: Spenser pretends that at a feast held by the Queene of Faerie, on each of twelve successive days a stranger in distress presented himself asking the Queene for a knight to champion his cause. Each book is concerned with one adventure; the first book for example deals with the legend of the Red Cross Knight or of Holiness. Spenser completed only six books and a fragment of the seventh. The characters and the incidents throughout carry an allegorical meaning. The Faerie Queene for example is Queen Elizabeth, and each knight represents some private virtue.

Spenser's Characteristics. Spenser's outstanding characteristics as a poet are his rich, romantic imagination and the "linkéd sweetness long drawn out" of his verse. The *Faerie Queene* is still read not so much for its story as for the marvelous beauty of its imagery. In writing it Spenser devised a new stanza form which takes its name from him—the Spenserian stanza. So well adapted is this stanza to the work that one reads page after page of Spenser's smooth, flowing, liquid verse without any sense of monotony. There is no humor to be found in Spenser. A high seriousness prevails throughout. He knew the secret of maintaining a high moral tone without being didactic.

Other Poets. It is impossible within the brief limits of this story to give anything approximating an adequate account of the great outburst of poetry which followed the pioneer work of Wyatt and Surrey. Between the publication of *Tottel's Miscellany* in 1557 and the end of the century there appeared several collections of songs from dozens of young poets. These songs, many of which are yet well known, exhibit a great variety of stanza form and exquisite lyric grace and sweetness. Nearly every poet also seems to have tried his hand at writing sonnets. Three of the most distinguished of the sonnet writers of the period are Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and Shakespeare, each of whom produced what is known as a sonnet cycle or series of connected sonnets. Most of these songs and sonnet cycles had love for a theme, but the age saw many poems on historical and patriotic subjects as well, for the age of Elizabeth was an intensely patriotic one.

Elizabethan Drama. The culmination toward which the English drama had been developing for centuries came in the days of Elizabeth. Until this time the drama had been the product largely of amateur writers. Dramatic writing now became a profession. The first men who took it up as a means of livelihood were the so-called University Wits, so named since they were all University men, who instead of going into the church or teaching, turned to writing to earn their living. For more extended account of the development of the professional stage the student should read the account in PROSE AND POETRY *Eleventh Year.* The most conspicuous of these University Wits was Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe produced before his death, at twenty-nine, four remarkable dramas, *Tamburlaine, Doctor Faustus, Edward II,* and *The Jew of Malta.* These plays were all written to be performed on the professional stage. The very titles will show how far the drama had traveled since the days of *Everyman.* In these the characters are concrete personages, one of them an English king. Instead of dealing with simply the conduct of life as *Everyman* did, they deal with great human passions, that of *The Jew of Malta,* for example, with the passion of revenge. Marlowe's principal contributions to the drama were energy, and the "mighty line"—the unrhymed iambic pentameter. Although Marlowe was not the first to use English blank verse, he succeeded in showing that it could be the vehicle of great poetry.

William Shakespeare (IX, X, XI, XII). Of Shakespeare, the greatest figure in English literature, a complete account has been given throughout the four books of the PROSE AND POETRY series.

Ben Jonson. The next greatest dramatist after Shakespeare is Ben Jonson. Unlike Marlowe and Shakespeare, Jonson was a learned man and a student of the classics. Jonson's plays are much different from those of Shakespeare and Marlowe. For his subject matter he went to contemporary life, producing what is known as the comedy of manners. His principal plays are *Every Man in his Humour, Every Man out of his Humour, The Silent Woman, The Alchemist, Volpone,* or *The Fox,* and two classical tragedies, *Sejanus* and *Catiline.* He also occupies a position foremost among writers of masks, and ranks with the great lyric poets of the period. His song, *Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes,* is one of the best known of Elizabethan lyrics. Jonson was also a critic of no mean ability.

Other Dramatists. Other dramatists of the period are Beaumont and Fletcher, who are credited with fifty-two plays; Thomas Dekker, whose best known plays are *The Shoemaker's Holiday* and *Old Fortunatus;* Thomas Heywood, called by Charles Lamb a "prose Shakespeare"; Thomas Middleton, a writer of romantic comedy; and John Webster, best known for his powerful tragedies of blood.

Elizabethan Prose Writers. The Elizabethan age also witnessed a remarkable development in English prose. The first of these in point of time is John Lyly from whose pen came a book called *Euphues* from the chief character in the book, a young Athenian who visits England. In Euphues's comment on English life and manners, Lyly voices his own criticism of the rather unpolished contemporary Englishman, intending thereby to stimulate an interest in and attention to polite amenities. The book was written in a somewhat high-flown, affected style which seems to have been much affected in speech by the courtiers of the day. The word "euphuism" which we use to describe an artificially elegant mode of literary expression is a derivative of Euphues. Another prose writer of note was Sir Philip Sidney whose *Arcadia,* a romance, has been called the first English novel. Sidney also wrote one of the first outstanding pieces of literary criticism in English entitled *Defense of Poesy.* The Reformation produced in Richard Hooker one of the clearest and most vigorous prose writers of the time whose chief work is *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity.* Other outstanding prose writers were Sir Walter Ralegh who wrote a

History of the World, Sir Francis Bacon, the distinguished philosopher, scientist, and lawyer, most of whose works are in Latin, the author of a book of *Essays,* distinguished for their compactness and worldly wisdom; Sir Thomas Overbury, author of a book of characters, and Robert Burton whose great work was *The Anatomy of Melancholy.*

Great Translations. The translation of foreign and classic books which had begun in the days of the early Renaissance continued in the days of Elizabeth. Translations came from Latin and Greek, from French, Italian, and Spanish, and included not only works of classic literature, but a number of historical works, the most famous of which was perhaps North's *Plutarch* first done out of the French in 1579; and a book setting a standard of courtly life and manners entitled *The Courtier,* translated from the Italian in 1561. Among famous translations were Phaer's *Vergil;* Golding's *Metamorphoses of Ovid;* Harrington's *Orlando Furioso;* Fairfax's *Jerusalem Delivered;* and Chapman's *Homer.*

The Authorized Version of 1611. An outstanding literary monument of the age was the authorized translation of the Bible, completed in 1611, made by forty-seven scholars assembled by James I. This version was not a translation anew, but rather a revision which represented the best work of scholars and translators from the days of Wyclif. Another great translation of the Bible was completed in 1609 at the English College at Douai in France, and is known as the Douai Version.

VII Cavalier and Puritan (1603–1660)

General Characteristics. Shakespeare died in 1616. Even before his death there were observable signs of a change coming over the face of English literature—a change which became more pronounced in the years following. The spirit of the Renaissance seems to have burned itself out. The delight in life and the intense vigor which had characterized the literature of the Elizabethan period gives way to a more sober, less confident mood. This is observable particularly in the religious and so-called metaphysical poets.

John Donne (1573–1631). In point of time John Donne who died in 1631 belongs perhaps with the Elizabethans but his poetry does not have the Elizabethan flavor. Donne's life is in fact a kind of symbol of the change which was taking place. As a young man Donne's life seems to have been that of an Elizabethan gallant but the love poetry which he wrote in his youth is quite different from that of Ben Jonson and those whom we think of as typical Elizabethans. His attitude was quite unlike that blind, intense devotion which Ben Jonson expresses in his poem, *Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes.* Donne takes a more realistic if not a somewhat cynical view of love. He seems to have felt that life after all could not yield enduring satisfaction. His poetry reflects a melancholy which appears to proceed from a consciousness that life regardless of what it seems to promise is, after all, a fleeting thing. When middle age was upon him, he entered the church. He rose rapidly to be Dean of St. Paul's and became perhaps the most celebrated preacher of his time. In his latter years, especially after the death of his wife, a kind of gloom settled down upon him. His poetry is intellectual, perhaps, rather than emotional and concerns itself with religious and philosophical aspects of life.

George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, and **Henry Vaughan.** These three poets are often grouped as the religious poets. None of them produced any great quantity of good poetry. They are sometimes referred to as the school of Donne.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674). Herrick, the most gifted of all the minor poets of this period, was a clergyman. His poetry while not reflecting an intense delight in life, is, however, not in the vein of the religious poets. It displays a quiet, bright, joy in living, without intensity of feeling. His best known poem and one of the most charming lyrics in English is *Corinna's Going A-Maying,* descriptive of the English custom of bringing in the May.

Cavalier Poets. Under this designation are usually included

Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, and Richard Lovelace. These men continued the Elizabethan lyric tradition. Their poetry is characterized by a carefree, dashing gayety which stands in great contrast to the melancholy of the religious poets. Perhaps the best known poem by one of these is *To Lucasta on Going to the Wars* by Lovelace.

Abraham Cowley and **Edmund Waller.** Both of these poets in their day were very popular. To the student of literature they are chiefly of interest for the reason that they are forerunners of the classical movement in English poetry. Waller developed what is known as the heroic couplet in which most of the poetry of Alexander Pope was written.

John Milton (XII). The outstanding poet of the period is John Milton. His life is given elsewhere in this volume.

Prose Writers. Among the principal prose writers of the period are Sir Thomas Browne, a physician, whose books *Religio Medici,* (*The Religion of a Doctor*), and *Urn Burial* are still read for the grandeur and solemnity of their style; Isaac Walton, whose *Compleat Angler* contains delightful glimpses of the English countryside interspersed with comments on the art of fishing; and two famous divines, Jeremy Taylor and Thomas Fuller whose works are still read for the charm of their style.

John Bunyan. Although John Bunyan's great work, *Pilgrim's Progress,* was not given to the world until several years after the close of the period, Bunyan belongs to Puritanism. Bunyan was a tinker and a man of little education. He was, however, a man of intensely religious nature. He became an itinerant preacher, but being a non-Conformist, after the Restoration he was arrested and spent twelve years in Bedford jail for unauthorized preaching. It was while he was in prison that he conceived the idea of *Pilgrim's Progress* which he published in 1678. This book is one of the world's great allegories. It tells the story of the journey of Christian from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. It is written with a vivid realism and simple language which at once recommended it to the great mass of people. Before Bunyan's death the book was well known in France and colonial America. It is said to be the best known book in our literature.

The Decline of the Drama. After the death of Shakespeare there was a notable decline in dramatic writing. This was due in a large measure to the antagonistic attitude of the Puritans who were becoming stronger and whose influence even in the days of Elizabeth had been exerted against playhouses and stage plays. Two dramatists of some note, Philip Massinger and James Shirley, close the long line of dramatic poets which began with Marlowe. In 1642 Parliament closed all the theaters throughout the kingdom and they were not reopened until the restoration of Charles II in 1660.

VIII THE AGE OF DRYDEN (1660–1700)

The Restoration. In 1660 the Puritan régime came to an end and Charles II ascended the English throne. It is from this reseating of the Stuart dynasty that the period takes its name—the Restoration. The Restoration period has certain definite characteristics which are reflected in the literature of the time. All England seems to have been possessed by a desire to get back to normal conditions. It was not a period of great enthusiasm; in fact the temper of the age was one that seemed to frown upon enthusiasms and desired most of all a settled and established way of life. This temper is reflected in the literature of the period in the absence from it of the intense interest in life which characterized the literature of the Elizabethan period and the enthusiasm for an ideal which had characterized the best writing of the Puritan period. The aim in literature became formal correctness, and the classics were studied as perfect models to be carefully imitated.

Classicism. For nearly a hundred years classicism was to dominate literature. The term classicism as here used has a specialized meaning. In a broad sense Milton might be called a classicist, for his poetry is shot through and through by the influence of the classics, but Milton dominated the classics. They were to him a source of inspiration, stimulating his imagination and creative powers. Classicism in the sense in which we are now using it means really a conventional way of writing. Imagination, emotion, and originality in literature were regarded as of secondary importance and emphasis was placed upon formal correctness and conformity to the generally accepted standards.

To let one's self go in verse, to burst into raptures about anything was regarded by the classicists as something not done by the best people in literature. Reason and common sense were to be observed by poetry. The result is that this period produced little nature poetry and little poetry that breathes delight in life or strong feeling of any kind. Most of it was addressed to the intelligence, and a great deal of the work of the lesser poets is little more than rhymed information—unimaginative and lifeless. The great variety of verse forms which had been developed in the days of Elizabeth fell into disuse, and a kind of standardized form—the heroic couplet came into use. No where is the conventional nature of the poetry of the period better illustrated than in the diction or idiom which it developed—a cottage is a "bower," a peasant is a "rustic" or a "swain," a crowd is a "train" and so on until such common things as pigs and hens had developed high-flown stock-designations, and to write poetry one had to forget the language of life and learn the jargon of classicism.

John Dryden (1631–1700). Dryden was the outstanding figure of the Restoration period. He was a most voluminous writer, having to his credit a number of long poems such as the *Annus Mirabilis or Wonderful Year,* a narrative account of the year 1666 during which the English achieved a number of naval victories over the Dutch and the great fire of London occurred, a number of satirical poems, several dramas, translations from Homer and the chief Latin poets, and a great many critical essays. Dryden illustrates most of the characteristics of classicism. One admires Dryden's literary skill, the keenness of his intellect, and his remarkable versatility, but one is not carried out of himself by anything that Dryden wrote. He developed the heroic couplet which in the succeeding years became, as it were, the badge of classicism. From 1670 to 1688 he was Poet Laureate.

Samuel Butler (1612–1680). To this period belongs Samuel Butler whom Carlyle mentions at the beginning of his *Essay on Burns*. Butler's one work entitled *Hudibras* was a satire upon the Puritans in which he ridiculed their hypocrisy and intolerance.

Samuel Pepys (1633–1703). One of the most interesting pictures of life and manners of the Restoration period has been left to us in the diary of Samuel Pepys. Pepys was not a literary man. He held a position somewhat similar to Secretary of the Navy. His diary in which he wrote with astonishing frankness of himself was done in cipher. It is interesting not as a literary work but rather as a human document.

The Restoration Drama. With the accession of Charles II the theaters were reopened and the drama became again a popular form of amusement. The chief dramatists of the age were John Dryden, who wrote a number of heroic plays, Thomas Otway, William Wycherley, and William Congreve. These two latter produced a number of comedies of life and manners. Their plays while frequently clever, are invariably low in moral tone.

IX The Age of Pope (1700–1740)

Alexander Pope (1688–1744). Alexander Pope is the chief representative of classicism in English literature. His outstanding characteristic is formal correctness. He brought the heroic couplet to a high degree of perfection, and his verse is written with precision and exactness. He is said to be one of the most quoted of English poets—one reason for this being that each couplet as Pope uses it embodies a complete thought stated in a neat and compact form. A good example is the well known quotation:

> A little learning is a dang'rous thing;
> Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:

Pope's deficiencies are lack of emotional power and force. His appeal is almost wholly to the intellect. The subjects on which he wrote for the most part might as well have been treated in prose. His chief poems are *The Dunciad*, a satire on some of his contemporaries; the *Rape of the Lock*, a mock-epic; the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, a satirical piece, the *Essay on Criticism*, and his *Essay on Man.*

Prose Writers. The emphasis which classicism placed upon formal correctness, clearness of expression, and literary finish was fatal to great poetry, but it was what English prose stood in need of. The age of Pope consequently is a great prose period. It produced Jonathan Swift, the author of *Gulliver's Travels* whose gift for realistic writing has never been surpassed; Daniel Defoe, best known as the author of *Robinson Crusoe;* and Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, the joint authors of the *Spectator,* the *Tatler,* and the Sir Roger de Coverley Papers which appeared in the *Spectator* series.

X THE AGE OF JOHNSON (1740–1780)

General Characteristics. This age takes its designation from Dr. Samuel Johnson, the subject of Macaulay's *Essay* which is printed elsewhere in this volume. Johnson himself was the last of the classicists. The period saw the beginnings of a revolt against the formalism of Pope and Dryden which was to culminate in what is known as the Romantic Movement. Indications of the new order are to be seen in both the prose and poetry of the period. The poetry in form is still predominantly classical, as for example *The Deserted Village,* but in content and feeling it savors of the new influences, as if men were pouring new wine into old bottles.

The Romantic Movement. The influences which may be detected in the literature of the age of Johnson, and which were to produce a kind of renaissance in poetry and develop a new literary form, the novel, may be briefly summarized as follows: (1) a return to life for subject matter and inspiration, as revealed in the poetry of Goldsmith and the novels of Fielding, (2) originality and individuality in choice of subject matter and form, best illustrated in the next period by Burns's subjects, his verse forms and use of dialect, (3) a quickening of emotion—especially a feeling for nature and for the common man, as illustrated in Gray's *Elegy,* (4) a return of idealism, as seen in both Goldsmith and Gray, (5) an awakening of the imagination, (6) and the manifestation of a romantic spirit in both prose and poetry.

The Naturalistic Poets. One aspect of this new movement is the revival of a feeling for nature, a feeling conspicuously absent from the poetry of Pope and Dryden. It is to be seen in the naturalistic poets, the first of whom was James Thomson, a Scotchman, who completed in 1730 a poem entitled *The Seasons* in four parts, *Spring, Summer, Autumn,* and *Winter,* which exhibits a genuine feeling for nature and a first hand acquaintance with it. A second and perhaps the most important of this group is William Collins, whose poem *Ode to Evening* is a nature poem of the first rank.

Thomas Gray (X) (1716–1771) and **Oliver Goldsmith** (X) (1728–1774). Both receive extended comment in PROSE AND POETRY *Tenth Year.* In both is a feeling for nature and a sympathy with the common man which connect them with the Romantic Movement.

Prose Writers. Aside from the novelists, three prose writers of the age of Johnson deserve mention. These are the Scotch philosopher, David Hume, the great historian, Edward Gibbon, whose monumental work *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in addition to being an outstanding piece of scholarship is conspicuous for its vividness and its stately style; and Edmund Burke (XII) who has to his credit a considerable body of writing in addition to his orations. A longer account of Burke is given elsewhere in this volume.

The Beginnings of the Novel. Like the drama the novel did not spring into existence fully developed. Books like Sidney's *Arcadia,* the *Pilgrim's Progress, Gulliver's Travels, Robinson Crusoe,* and the Sir Roger de Coverley Papers each made some contribution to this new form. The novel properly speaking is a long fictitious narrative with a more or less well developed plot which has for its purpose the portrayal of life and manners.

Bunyan, Swift and Defoe contributed the gift of writing fictitious narrative so that it had an air of truth. Addison and Steele directed attention to life and manners and also created in Sir Roger de Coverley and his friends a number of well-developed fictitious characters. There came now in the age of Johnson a number of men who wrote entertaining stories of fictitious characters whose fortunes they pursued over a considerable period. The first of these was Samuel Richardson whose *Pamela* is oftentimes referred to as the first real novel. This book was the result, one might say, of accident. Richardson, a printer, had set out to compile a kind of model letter-writer, and in the execution of his plans he conceived the idea of connecting his letters by a story. The book takes its name from its chief character, Pamela Andrews. So entertaining was Richardson's model letter-writer that he followed it up with two other stories told through the medium of a series of letters. These are *Clarissa Harlowe,* and the *History of Sir Charles Grandison.* His stories are somewhat sentimental, a fact which shows him not to have been a classicist, yet they show a classic realism. The greatest of the novelists of the period was Henry Fielding, whose four novels are *Joseph Andrews, Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great, Amelia,* and his masterpiece, *Tom Jones.* Fielding's outstanding characteristics are vigor and energy, humor, and realism. To this period also belong Tobias Smollett, the author of five novels the best of which is *Humphrey Clinker,* and Laurence Sterne, whose *Tristram Shandy* and *Sentimental Journey* were admired by Burns. Mention should also be made of Horace Walpole whose romantic story, the *Castle of Otranto,* is a forerunner of the medieval romances of Sir Walter Scott. One of the best novels of the period is Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield.*

The Drama. The age of Johnson produced two dramatists of merit, Oliver Goldsmith who wrote *The Good-Natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer;* and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, author of *The Critic, The School for Scandal,* and a third play which is still popular on the stage, *The Rivals.*

XI THE AGE OF BURNS (1780–1800)

Robert Burns (XII) (1759–1796). Burns himself is the best embodiment of all those tendencies exhibited by the Romantic Movement. In the choice of subject matter he stands in marked contrast to the classicists. A field mouse, for example, to Alexander Pope would hardly have been sufficiently dignified to justify a heroic couplet. In addition to the individuality which Burns shows in the choice of his material, he exhibits strong feeling, especially for nature and for his fellow man, and he wrote his poetry not in the form approved by the classicists, but in Scotch dialect. As a matter of fact, Burns's poorest poetry is that in which he employed the classic idiom. A critical estimate of Burns's life and work will be found in this volume in Carlyle's *Essay on Burns.*

Minor Poets. Three minor poets contemporary with Burns illustrate the newer tendencies in poetry. These are William Cowper whose best known poem is perhaps the humorous piece, *John Gilpin's Ride;* George Crabbe whose poem *The Village* describes the short and simple annals of the poor in a Suffolk fishing hamlet; and William Blake, a romantic and extremely emotional poet, author of the well-known poem *The Tiger.*

The Novel. During the age of Burns the development of the novel continued. Frances Burney, afterward Madame D'Arblay, one of the outstanding women novelists in our literature, continued the type which originated with Richardson in her *Evelina* and her *Cecilia.* The romance now received further impetus in the hands of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe whose story, the *Mysteries of Udolpho,* is representative of a number of tales of mystery and terror which now began to appear. In *Caleb Williams* a third writer, William Godwin, made use of the novel to preach social and political reform, thus establishing himself as a forerunner of Dickens.

XII THE AGE OF WORDSWORTH (1800–1837)

Poetry. The year 1800 brings us to the threshold of one of the greatest poetry periods in our literature—the Age of Wordsworth, which saw the culmination of the Romantic Movement.

William Wordsworth (1770–1850). Wordsworth was born in a small village in Cumberland and grew up as a boy in the beautiful Lake District of England. He attended Cambridge University and after his graduation spent two years in continental travel. In France he came into contact with the ideas which produced the French Revolution, and as a young man his sympathies were wholly with the revolutionists. The excesses of the Revolution resulted in disillusionment and a despondency from which he turned to nature. Wordsworth is the great poet of nature in our literature. His poetic development is unfolded to us in a long poem called the *Prelude* in which he reveals to us the effect which nature had upon him as a young man. He said:

The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.

These lines describe a nature tremendously sensitive to the outward charms and aspects of the natural world. It was a feeling, as he says, that had no need of a charm "unborrowed from the eye." As the years wore on, however, Wordsworth came to be an interpreter of nature and to feel in it,

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

The philosophy of nature expressed in these lines pervades all Wordsworth's poetry.

Wordsworth's Poetry. Wordsworth's greatest poem is the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* in which he voices his belief in the immortality of the soul which comes

> From God, who is our home.

Outstanding among his longer poems are the *Prelude, Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey, On the Banks of the Wye* from which the second quotation in the paragraph above comes, *The Excursion,* and the narrative pastoral poem *Michael.* He was also the author of a great number of shorter pieces, the best known of which are probably *The Daffodils,* and *Ode to Duty.* Wordsworth is also one the great masters of the sonnet in our literature. Wordsworth's poetry is characterized by sincerity of feeling, simplicity, and accuracy of description in the portrayal of nature. In diction Wordsworth was particularly careful to avoid the stilted idiom of the classicists and to use only the language of common speech.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (IX) (1772–1834). An extended treatment of Coleridge's life and his poetry will be found in connection with *The Ancient Mariner* in PROSE AND POETRY *Ninth Year.*

Sir Walter Scott (IX) (1771–1832). Scott began his literary career as a poet and achieved popularity with his spirited and romantic metrical tales, *The Lady of the Lake, Marmion,* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.* An account of Scott will be found in PROSE AND POETRY *Ninth Year* in connection with *Ivanhoe.*

George Gordon, Lord Byron (X) (1788–1824). In PROSE AND POETRY *Tenth Year* there is a treatment of Byron's life and poetry in connection with *The Prisoner of Chillon.*

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) and **John Keats** (1795–1821). Shelley and Keats are the two greatest lyric poets in English literature. In both burned the pure flame of genius. In the business of living they were both unfortunate; each accomplished his work early in life; Shelley was dead at thirty, and Keats at twenty-five.

Shelley was an idealist who could not adjust himself to the arrangements of a practical world. Everywhere in his poetry one hears an echo of the feeling which finds expression in the *Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples:*

I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne, and yet must bear,
  Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
  My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

His poetry is unsurpassed for music, sheer imagination, and magic power—qualities exhibited to a supreme degree in *The Cloud, To a Skylark,* and *Ode to the West Wind.* His longer poems are the narrative *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude, Adonais,* an elegy which ranks with the *Lycidas* of Milton, and the lyrical dramas *Prometheus Unbound,* and *The Cenci.*

John Keats is often called "The Apostle of Beauty." It is he who says:

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness.

These lines embody his poetic creed which finds illustration in such poems as his well-known short poems, *Ode to Autumn, Ode on a Grecian Urn, Ode to a Nightingale,* and *The Eve of St. Agnes.* Keats was also the author of a number of long, narrative poems, *Hyperion, Lamia,* and *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil.*

Minor Poets. The chief minor poets of the period are Robert Southey, Poet Laureate after Wordsworth, and the author of a number of romantic narrative poems; Thomas Campbell, best known for his spirited battle ballads, *Ye Mariners of England, Hohenlinden,* and *The Battle of the Baltic;* and Thomas Moore, now chiefly remembered for two songs from his *Irish Melodies, The Harp that Once Through Tara's Halls,* and *Believe Me if all those Endearing Young Charms.*

Novelists. The great novelists of the age of Wordsworth were Sir Walter Scott, who has been referred to above, and Jane Austen, whose books are quite different in every respect from those of Scott. She writes of quiet, uneventful English village life, portraying it in detail with a careful realism and drawing her characters with fidelity and accuracy. Her novels are not at all exciting, but they have never been equaled for their faithful portrayal of the every-day life which she chose to depict. The titles of her books are, *Emma, Mansfield Park, Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility,* and *Pride and Prejudice,* which is usually considered her masterpiece.

Essayists. The first half of the nineteenth century saw the development of the literary type known as the familiar essay. When we think of the familiar essay perhaps the first name which comes to our mind is Charles Lamb whose *Essays of Elia* written on everything from *Poor Relations* to *Old China* possess an ease and grace and a whimsical charm which make them inimitable. Contemporary with Lamb were Thomas De Quincey, best remembered for his *Joan of Arc,* and *English Mail-Coach;* William Hazlitt; and Leigh Hunt.

XIII THE VICTORIAN ERA (1837–1901)

General Characteristics. These years saw a number of changes in English life, an understanding of which is necessary to an interpretation of the literature which the period produced. There was on the material side, a great growth in wealth following upon the commercial expansion which resulted from the Industrial Revolution. This material prosperity was accompanied by a rapid growth of great industrial towns and brought in its wake a great variety of social and economic problems. An attempt to deal with the economic problems gave rise to the science of economics which produced a number of writers such as Bentham, Mill, and others. On the spiritual side, life was affected by this material prosperity, and also by the activity in natural science which gave to the world the theory of evolution and other theories which upset established opinions based upon Biblical authority. To men like Carlyle the materialism of the age was anathema, for it seemed to him that the effect of material prosperity was to make men lose sight of spiritual values; and in men like Matthew Arnold and Tennyson, the new scientific theories which seemed so difficult to reconcile with the old beliefs, gave rise to doubt which unsettled faith. Another characteristic of this age was the growth of political democracy which brought about a reform of Parliament and extension of the franchise—a movement which also is reflected in literature. Democracy had not only its adherents but also its critics, especially Carlyle, who could not see how the right to vote would give men the qualities of mind and soul which it seemed to him that the age was most in need of.

The Novelists. The novel reaches its high-water mark in the Victorian Era. Cheap printing and a wide reading public tended to popularize it, and it became the means through which men pictured the life and manners of their own and other times and also a vehicle for criticism of their own age and a means for urging various reforms.

Charles Dickens (X) (1812–1870). An account of Dickens's life is given in PROSE AND POETRY *Tenth Year* in connection with *A Tale of Two Cities*. He was one of the most popular novelists of his day. In his hands the novel became a means of making a powerful protest against such evils as the law's delay, debtors' prisons, the inhuman treatment of foundlings, and undesirable practices in boys' schools. As a reformer and humanitarian Dickens exerted a powerful influence upon his age.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863). Thackeray was a man of altogether different temperament from Dickens. He is not concerned with social problems, but endeavors to see life whole and see it steadily. He possessed a penetrating insight into human nature, seeing through sham and pretense and viewing life without illusion. His method is that of the realist, who endeavors to picture life faithfully and accurately as it is. The characters in his books come from the higher social levels. His novel, *Henry Esmond,* laid in the days of Queen Anne is regarded by many as the greatest English novel. A close second to this is *Vanity Fair*, laid in London in the days of the Napoleonic Wars. *The Newcomes* and *Pendennis* deal with contemporary life. In addition to these he wrote a sequel to *Henry Esmond*, entitled *The Virginians*.

George Eliot (X) (1819–1880). An account of George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) who ranks with Dickens and Thackeray as a novelist will be found in PROSE AND POETRY *Tenth Year* in connection with her novel, *Silas Marner*.

Other Novelists. In addition to Dickens, Thackeray, and Eliot, the Victorian Era produced a number of novelists of considerable ability. Among these were Bulwer-Lytton (IX) who continued the romantic strain of Scott, whose best known books are *The Last Days of Pompeii, Rienzi, The Last of the Barons*, and *Harold;* Benjamin Disraeli, three times Prime Minister of England, and the author of four novels; Charlotte Brontë, best remembered for her book *Jane Eyre;* Charles Kingsley, author of *Hypatia*, *Westward Ho*, and *Herward the Wake;* and Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell, who produced in *Cranford* a realistic novel of distinction.

Other Prose. Scientific investigation, social and economic problems, religion, and politics gave rise to a great variety of writing, much of which has qualities which entitle it to consideration in any sketch of English literature.

Thomas Carlyle (XII) (1795–1881). From Carlyle's pen came a number of essays in reaction to the economic advance and the democratic movement of his time. In these Carlyle appears as a fervid preacher, emphasizing spiritual qualities. He refused to see in either material prosperity or political democracy a cure-all for the ills that afflict mankind. His doctrine put emphasis on the individual, who, he contended, alone can work out his salvation through work, righteousness and obedience to the higher law. He distrusted science, feeling that it was materialistic, and he distrusted logic and reason, believing that the source of truth is intuition and revelation. His best literary work is probably to be found in his histories and biographies. His *French Revolution,* while not "dry as dust" history, gives a picture of revolutionary France without equal for its vividness and forcefulness. His *Heroes and Hero Worship* is a series of interpretative essays based upon great figures in the world's history. The biographies which he wrote illustrate a favorite doctrine with him that the progress of mankind has been due not to the mass but to the activities of great personalities. Conspicuous among these biographies are his *History of Frederick the Great,* a tremendous work in twenty-one books, *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches,* and his *Life of Schiller.*

Thomas Babington Macaulay (XII) (1800–1859). Macaulay was more in harmony with the spirit of his day. His attitude toward his time is expressed in a statement in which he says, "An acre in Middlesex is better than a principality in Utopia. The smallest actual good is better than the most magnificent promises of impossibilities. The wise man of the Stoics would no doubt be a grander object than a steam-engine. But there are steam-engines. And the wise man of the Stoics is yet to be born." His work consists largely of critical and historical essays. He was lacking in depth and ability to see below the surface. His great gift was a clear, brilliant style which enabled him to picture the exterior characteristics of men and manners with remarkable vividness. His best work is his *History of England.*

John Ruskin (1819–1900). Ruskin was born in London of Scottish parentage. His father was a wine merchant of considerable means. His early education was carefully supervised by his parents. One feature of it was a thorough knowledge of the Bible which he received from his mother, a very religious and devout woman. After attending Christ Church, Oxford, he turned his attention to art and as an art critic in *Modern Painters, The Seven Lamps of Architecture,* and *Stones of Venice,* he made his first appearance in print. He became increasingly absorbed, however, in the great problems of his time, seeing in commercialism and the struggle for wealth the destruction of spiritual values. In a number of books such as *Unto This Last,* and *Munera Pulveris,* he strikes at the materialism of his age.

His best known work is probably *Sesame and Lilies* which illustrates both his doctrine and his rich musical prose style.

John Henry, Cardinal Newman (1801–1890). Newman began his great career while a student at Oxford where he was the founder of the Oxford Movement which had for its object restoring the Church of England to the position of spiritual leadership which had characterized the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. His writing was almost wholly devoted to explaining and furthering the Oxford Movement. In 1845 he was received into the Church of Rome, becoming a Cardinal of the Church in 1878. Probably his most widely known piece of work is *The Idea of a University*. He took great pains to make his English style clear and exact and his writings show him a master of a remarkably lucid, transparent English.

Matthew Arnold (X) (1822–1888). Although Matthew Arnold began as a poet, he is best known today as a writer of literary criticism. Arnold, like Carlyle and Ruskin, was a critic of his age. As an antidote to materialism he preached the doctrine of culture which he defined as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world." Arnold's religious faith was unsettled by the science of his day. His attitude finds expression in one of the best of his poems, *Dover Beach,* in which he says:

> . . . for the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Historians, Philosophers, and Scientists. Conspicuous among such men whose works are still highly regarded both for the soundness of their scholarship and their literary qualities are the following: William Stubbs, best known for *A Constitutional*

History of England; William Lecky, author of *The History of European Morals* and *History of England in the 18th Century;* John Richard Green whose *A Short History of the English People* has never been surpassed for its vivid, imaginative style in the field of historical writing; and James Anthony Froude whose *History of England* covering the period of the English Reformation, if somewhat inaccurate and prejudiced, displays a gift for pictorial writing not surpassed by Macaulay. Among the philosophers and scientists who find a place in literature are John Stuart Mill who had the gift of making the driest subject matter interesting and is at his best in his essays, *Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women;* Charles Darwin, author of an interesting book of travel, *Voyage in the "Beagle,"* and the famous books in which he propounded in a plain but clear style his evolutionary theory, *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man;* Herbert Spencer, a philosophical writer who popularized evolution; and Thomas Henry Huxley, master of a lucid style and one of the most distinguished of Victorian scientists whose essay *On a Piece of Chalk* is often printed in anthologies as a good illustration of his writing.

Victorian Poetry. The Victorian Era was productive of a great body of poetry. Men like Tennyson and Browning who vied with one another for first honors, accepted the age and identified themselves with it. There is in these two, little note of protest or dissatisfaction. In Rossetti, Morris, and Swinburne, however, there is evidence of a kind of attempt to escape the period to find satisfaction in emotion, ideal beauty, and a dream world. All the poetry of the period, however, is strongly flavored with romanticism.

Tennyson (XI) (1809–1892) and **Browning** (XI) (1812–1889). The lives of these men are given elsewhere. It remains to say something of their outstanding characteristics as poets and of their relation to the age. Browning accepted the age completely. Science did not disturb him as it did Matthew Arnold. Throughout his poetry is the note of confidence that is best expressed in the line

> God's in his heaven, all's right with the world.

Browning's great interest is in personality, and his favorite poetic form is the dramatic monologue which he uses with great effect in revealing personality to us. *My Last Duchess* is an excellent illustration of both his interest and his poetic method. His genius was essentially dramatic and in addition to a great number of monologues he wrote two successful dramas, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* and *Strafford.* His masterpiece is the long poem, *The Ring and the Book,* which is but a series of dramatic monologues in which each of ten interested persons gives his point of view on the murder of a Roman girl, Pompilia, by her husband, Count Guido, thereby revealing his own personality and soul. The attitude of Tennyson toward the age was less sure than that of Browning. In *In Memoriam* Tennyson expresses himself as follows:

> Our little systems have their day:
>   They have their day and cease to be:
>   They are but broken lights of thee,
> And thou, O Lord, art more than they.
>
> We have but faith: we cannot know;
>   For knowledge is of things we see;
>   And yet we trust it comes from thee,
> A beam in darkness: let it grow.

The lines do not have the ring of confidence which we sense in Browning. Tennyson displays more of an interest in nature than Browning; and he is not so much the interpreter of individual passion as of the established order. He is dominated by a sense of law and is the poet of morality and culture. He was a very careful workman and his poetry shows him a conscious and finished artist, with a wonderful eye for color and an equally wonderful ear for music.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882). Rossetti was the son of an Italian patriot and exile and a brother of Christina Rossetti who has been called the greatest poetess in our language. Rossetti was both artist and poet and he is capable of exquisite music. His verse is rich in color and imagery. These qualities are illustrated in two of his best known short poems, *The Blessed Damozel* and *Sister Helen.* Rossetti was one of the founders of the pre-Raphaelite movement which was an attempt to bring back to English art the freshness and naïve simplicity of early Italian art.

William Morris (1834–1896). One of the most interesting characters of the later Victorian days was William Morris, the author of a great deal of excellent, vivid, narrative poetry, inspired by his interest in the Middle Ages and in the old Norse legends. He was particularly successful in creating the atmosphere of the time of which he writes. Like Ruskin whose disciple he may be said to be, he was interested in art, believing that "real art is the expression by man of his pleasure and labor," and believing that no man "can be happy in his labor without expressing that happiness." Accordingly, he held that the thing which would relieve the worker of drudgery and make his life worth living was the cultivation of such an attitude of his work as that which characterized the medieval artist craftsman who took pride in the quality of his workmanship. Morris himself put his own theory in execution, becoming a designer of furniture, wall paper and tapestry, and glorying in the title "master artisan." The Morris chair takes its name from him. He was a remarkably sincere and unselfish person devoted to bringing true happiness back into the lives of the great mass of workingmen.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909). Swinburne is another poet who was in revolt against the tendencies of his age and sought escape from it. His inspiration comes from antiquity and from the Middle Ages. He experimented with a number of verse forms from the Italian and French in which he wrote poems marked for their sweetness and music. He is primarily a lyric poet, but he wrote a successful long narrative entitled *Tristram of Lyonesse,* and two Greek tragedies *Atalanta in Calydon* famed for its choruses, *Erechtheus,* and a triology after an Elizabethan model on Mary, Queen of Scots.

Later Victorian Novelists. The long reign of Victoria covered a period of sixty-four years. The great novelists whose works had appeared in the early days of her reign were all dead by 1880. A new group was coming into being, the most distinguished of whom, Thomas Hardy, was to live until 1928. With the possible exception of Stevenson, these men all exhibit a reaction against the confidence which characterized the Victorian era. They are strongly individualistic in their reaction and attitude. They do not seek escape as the later Victorian poets did, nor do they accept the world as Browning and Tennyson did.

Robert Louis Stevenson (IX) (1850–1894). Stevenson looked upon fiction as a means of escape. He contended that it should be to the grown man what play is to the child. In addition to *Treasure Island* which is the greatest adventure story in our literature, he wrote a number of romances which have many of the outstanding characteristics of this work. The titles of these are *Kidnapped, The Master of Ballantrae, David Balfour,* and the unfinished romances *St. Ives,* and *Weir of Hermiston.* He is the author, also, of a number of interesting short stories and delightful essays.

George Meredith (1828–1909). Meredith is entitled to a place among the great English novelists. His recognition by the public was belated and may be said to have been delayed until after his death. Meredith began as a poet. His attitude toward life, or his philosophy, is best illustrated by his masterpiece *The Egoist.* According to him, it is out of egoism that come all the ills that flesh is heir to. The antidote to this is what he calls the Comic Spirit or the "genius of thoughtful laughter" which, by making folly, vanity and ambition appear ridiculous, destroys them. Meredith's chief novels are *Evan Harrington, The Egoist, The Ordeal of Richard Feberel, Diana of the Crossways,* and an essay in criticism entitled *The Essay on Comedy.*

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928). By far the greatest figure in recent English literature is Thomas Hardy. He has the distinction of being both a great poet and a great novelist. Hardy was born in Wessex and began life as an architect. His first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, was published in 1868 and his last, *The Well-Beloved*, in 1897, after which he turned to the writing of poetry. His novels, all of which deal with rustic or provincial life, are all laid in his native Wessex. He is primarily a novelist of character but he is also a master of plot. One of his chief characteristics is his faithful portrayal of life. His philosophy is somewhat fatalistic; he conceives of men and women as the puppets of circumstance in the clutch of great blind forces which they are quite powerless to affect. This idea is also seen in his poetry, as the titles of some of his volumes indicate, such as *Satires of Circumstance* and *Time's Laughing Stocks*. He is no optimist; on the other hand, the term pessimist is hardly applicable to him. He is rather one who hears the still sad music of humanity. His principal novels are *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Woodlanders*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure*. In addition to a number of volumes of short poems, one of his greatest works in verse is *The Dynasts*, a dramatic piece based on the Napoleonic Wars.

Samuel Butler (1853–1903) and **George Gissing** (1857–1903). Butler was a critic of his age which he attacked in two satirical novels *Erehwon* and *The Way of All Flesh*. Gissing, who saw no romance in life, was an uncompromising realist, whose attention was centered upon poverty and hardship. His masterpiece is *New Grub Street*.

Later Victorian Poets. During the nineties come a number of poets whom it is difficult to classify. In many of them are evidences of some of the tendencies observable in contemporary poetry. Many of them lived on into the first decade of the twentieth century but in the case of all of them their work was practically done by 1900. Among these are W. E. Henley, an experimenter with free verse, best known for his short poem *Invictus;* John Davidson, a realist, author of *Fleet Street Eclogues*, *Ballads and Songs*, and *Testaments*, a genuine poet but somewhat of a skeptic; Francis Thompson, a religious mystic, author of one great poem *The Hound of Heaven;* William Watson, who carried on the Tennysonian tradition; Stephen Phillips, writer of dramas and lyrics; Alfred Austin, Poet Laureate from 1896 to 1913; and Oscar Wilde, whose best known poem is *The Ballad of Reading Gaol.*

XIV CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE (1901–1930)

The first thing which strikes one about contemporary literature is the great mass of it, and the second thing is that every writer seems to be a law unto himself. It is quite impossible to classify or group authors with respect to any great movement or tendency of the times. In poetry there is observable a great break with the past in content, form, and treatment. As new aspects of life have developed, new sources of poetic inspiration and material have likewise developed. In both poetry and prose there is observable a strong tendency to realism. There has been a revival in the drama, and in the hands of many authors the drama has become a form through which they have expressed their criticism of life and advocated reform. A recent writer says, "The division into literary kinds is the only practicable order. . . . Never were these categories more external. Never did the personality of each writer count for more, as compared with the general form of his expression. And never did temperaments more forcibly refuse to comply with a common style, one method, one programme. It has often been noticed that the era of literary doctrines and schools seems to be over."

Contemporary Verse. New anthologies of contemporary poetry come daily from the press. They contain literally hundreds of names each represented by one or more creditable poems. Poets like Winifred Letts, author of *The Spires of Oxford,* Coventry Patmore, W. H. Davies, Walter de la Mare, Alice Meynell, Siegfried Sassoon, Sir Henry Newboldt, Rupert Brooke, W. W. Gibson, Ralph Hodgson, John Drinkwater, A. E. Houseman, James Stephens, Robert Graves, Harold Monro, and Gilbert K. Chesterton, have all produced poems which will make their names long remembered. Among those who have produced a greater volume of verse are Robert Bridges, Alfred Noyes, Rudyard Kipling, and John Masefield.

Robert Bridges (1844–1930). Bridges was Poet Laureate from 1913 to 1930. He produced a considerable body of poetry characterized by classic perfection in form and quiet beauty. His poetry is not the product of intense feeling and it reveals rather the scholar and man of deep culture. His greatest piece of work, *The Testament of Beauty,* published shortly before his death in 1930, is a piece which will without doubt entitle him to a place among the philosophical poets.

Alfred Noyes (1880–). Noyes has produced a great body of poetry written in conventional meters and having a popular appeal. It is not likely that Noyes will survive the test of time as well as some of the poets mentioned above whose productions have been far less than his. He is lacking in intensity of feeling, imagination, and thought. His verse while oftentimes full of color gives the impression of being over-ornamented. He inclines to a rather romantic, colorful treatment. For example, his long romantic tale *Drake* is a rather sentimental treatment of the subject quite lacking in the conviction and realism that one imagines Masefield would give to the same subject. Noyes is best known for a few short poems such as *Kilmeny, The Barrel Organ,* and *The Highwayman.*

Rudyard Kipling (IX). Kipling's place in literature is assured to him by his short stories, probably, rather than by his verse. Some account of his stories is given elsewhere in this series. The volume of poems by which he is probably best known is the *Barrack Room Ballads* published in 1892. He has continued since then, however, to write poems many of which such as the *Recessional, The Sons of Martha,* and *The Return* show him at his best. He is the outstanding exponent in verse of British imperialism and the father of "drum and trumpet" poetry. His verse and his thought are always forceful and vigorous and in this respect he stands in marked contrast to many of his contemporaries. He is a popular poet—which is no doubt in a great measure due to the fact that he is the master of powerful and striking rhythms.

John Masefield. Masefield, the present Poet Laureate, is probably entitled to be called the greatest living English poet. Masefield was born in 1874. At the age of fourteen he went to sea and spent a number of years before the mast, winding up in New York in 1896 where he worked for a time as a kind of porter in Luke O'Connor's saloon and in a Yonkers carpet factory. Although as a boy he had made a few juvenile attempts at poetry, he had not felt the urge to write until one Sunday afternoon in a Yonkers rooming house he read Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.* It was Chaucer, so to speak, who unlocked his genius and became his model. His long narrative poems *The Everlasting Mercy, The Widow in the Bye Street* and *Dauber* come directly from his experiences and contacts with life and show how deep is his sympathy for all those who are "hemmed in by the spears" of life. They are written in verse resembling the rime royal of Chaucer. These poems illustrate his realism. *The Everlasting Mercy* tells the story of Saul Kane, a drunken poacher, of his fist fight with another of his kind, of the stirrings within him of compunction, of his drunken debauch, and of his regeneration and reaching out to the "everlasting mercy." The story is told in Saul Kane's own language—coarse and at times blasphemous—but it is the authentic record of the struggle of a soul against evil and of its yearning for peace. It is not Saul Kane's fault that he does not talk the dignified language of philosophy. *The Widow in the Bye Street,* whose son must die on the gallows, has all the pathos of Wordsworth's *Michael. Dauber* is in some respects the best of these three as poetry. Of all contemporary poets, Masefield is preëminently the poet of the sea. *Sea-Fever* is the work of a sailor—no landsman could write it.

The Celtic Revival. In Ireland the movement known as the Celtic Revival produced a number of lyric poets of distinction. The best known of these is William Butler Yeats, recipient of the Nobel Prize in 1923, author of a number of poems of Irish life of which *The Fiddler of Dooney* and *The Song of Wandering Aengus* are excellent examples. To this group of poets also belong "A. E." (George W. Russell), Padraic Colum, James Stevens, and Katharine Tynan.

The Drama. Due, it would seem, to the influence of Ibsen, the Norwegian dramatist, whose plays of contemporary life and manners came to London in the eighties, there began a revival of the English literary drama. The names associated with this revival are Oscar Wilde, author of two comedies *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and a romantic tragedy *Salome;* Henry Arthur Jones who produced a number of successful plays such as *The Silver King, The Middleman* and *Mrs. Dane's Defense;* and Arthur Wing Pinero, best known probably for *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, Trelawney of the Wells,* and *The Gay Lord Quex.* All three of these writers show considerable ability and dramatic technique and dialogue but their dramas are not particularly significant as criticisms of life nor outstanding as literature. Stephen Phillips, mentioned above among the later Victorian poets, attempted to write a drama in accordance with the great literary tradition of the past, but although he produced some very good poetry, his plays were not very successful on the stage.

The Irish Drama. In Ireland the Celtic revival was also reflected in an attempt to establish an Irish National Theater at Dublin and resulted in a body of literary drama of considerable merit. The greatest of the Irish dramatists is John Millington Synge whose best known plays are *Riders to the Sea, The Play Boy of the Western World,* and *Deidre of the Sorrows.* William Butler Yeats also turned his attention to dramatic writing, producing in verse the tragedy *Deidre* and *The Land of Heart's Desire.* Two other representatives of this Irish movement are Lord Dunsany, author of a number of plays, best known of which is *The Gods of the Mountain,* and Lady Gregory, author of *The Rising Moon, Spreading the News,* and *Workhouse Ward.*

English Dramatists. Among English dramatists and English men of letters who have also written plays are to be noted Arnold Bennett; Somerset Maughan; Granville Barker, a playwright of considerable ability whose best known play is *The Madras House;* John Masefield, author of *The Tragedy of Man* and *The Tragedy of Pompey the Great;* and John Drinkwater, best known probably, for his *Abraham Lincoln.*

John Galsworthy (XI) (1867–). Galsworthy is better known as a novelist but he has used the drama especially for the purpose of social criticism in such plays as *The Silver Box, Justice, Strife,* and *Loyalties.*

James Matthew Barrie (IX) (1860–). Barrie is also a novelist and short story writer. His stories receive mention elsewhere in the series. He is best known for his plays. Barrie is not concerned with social problems. First of all he is an able playwright; he writes plays which will act, and which abound in charm, whimsical fantasy, and humor. His characters also are well done. Practically all his plays are well known and many of them have been popularized through amateur production. His chief plays are *The Admirable Creighton, What Every Woman Knows, Dear Brutus, Peter Pan,* and *A Kiss for Cinderella.*

George Bernard Shaw (1856–). The most outstanding personality in English drama today is George Bernard Shaw. By birth Shaw is an Irishman, born in Dublin in 1856. At the age of twenty he went to London and there during the next ten years went through a variety of experiences, followed a variety of occupations, and became an ardent socialist. During these years his mind was set on a literary career. In 1895 he became a dramatic critic for the *Saturday Review.* Shaw has been a prolific writer and talker; he has written essays and social and literary criticism, and probably none of his contemporaries has given more interviews. He has a habit of prefixing to his plays prefaces, which are oftentimes longer than the play itself, to explain the ideas embodied in the play. In Shaw's hands the play is invariably simply a means for social satire. In the present arrangements of society he finds much which stirs his dissatisfaction. His first play of consequence was *Arms and the Man* produced in 1894. It is a satire upon military glory. Other outstanding plays are *Caesar and Cleopatra, Man and Superman, John Bull's Other Island, Androcles and the Lion, Pygmalion, Heartbreak House, Back to Methuselah,* and *Saint Joan;* in some respects this last play is his best. There is satire in it but it is subdued and directed against a human weakness of long standing. According to Shaw's interpretation of Joan of Arc, the root of her power was not in the supernatural so much as in her unselfish devotion and sincerity, qualities whose great power Shaw implies the practical man has always been so blind to that he has, as in the case of Joan of Arc, attributed their effect to everything but the true cause. Shaw is versatile, keen, and stimulating, but it is to be questioned if he can be credited with great creative ability.

The Contemporary Novel. In the hands of many contemporary English novelists, this form has tended to become an instrument for social criticism. Throughout many novels dissimilar in other respects the writer is busy with some phase of life or some problem growing out of the new social order which science and the machine age are developing, attempting to interpret this new order or showing it in conflict with the old. Changing standards of public and private morality, new family and social relationships, the effect of new scientific discoveries in biology, medicine, psychology, and sociology upon the individual and upon new relationships, the passing of old conventions—all these find treatment in the contemporary novel. As in other forms there has been great activity in this field of writing. A list of men and women who have produced novels of some consequence would run to great length. In it would appear such names as Maurice Hewlett who has done a number of historical romances, one of the best of which is *Richard Yea and Nay;* Robert Hichens, author of a number of psychological novels; William DeMorgan, who continues the Victorian tradition; Eden Phillpotts, whose best work portrays the Dartmoor country; John Masefield; Hugh Walpole, whose novel *The Cathedral* is a splendid character study; Gilbert K. Chesterton;

Compton McKenzie; William J. Locke who writes pure romance; Archibald Marshall; and a host of others.

Joseph Conrad (1856–1924). Conrad was a Pole by birth, born in Ukraine and educated at Cracow. For twenty years he followed the sea, finally becoming a shipmaster in the British merchant marine. Although Conrad could speak no English until he was past twenty and was nearly forty before he did his first novel he is one of the outstanding writers of our generation. Most of his stories have the sea as a background and are distinguished for their rich, poetic descriptions. His principal novels are *Almayer's Folly, The Nigger of the Narcissus, Lord Jim,* a remarkable piece of character study, *Youth, Nostromo,* probably his masterpiece, *Chance, Victory, The Rescue,* and *The Rover.*

H. G. Wells (1866–). Wells has been a prolific writer having to his credit a great number of stories, essays, novels, and his well known *Outline of History.* He is a popular and stimulating writer with no small fund of humor, and a good storyteller. His novels deal with a number of different phases of the new social order. In one group, of which *The Time Machine* and *The War in the Air* are examples, his imagination goes out to picture for us in a vivid manner the effect of modern science on human affairs. In another group he exploits his views on sociology and religion, as in *New Worlds for Old* and *The Soul of a Bishop;* again his theme is education as in *Joan and Peter* and the sketch of Sanderson of Oundle. Most of his books are probably bound to lose interest to future generations. Some of his best work is to be seen in *Kipps, Tono-Bungay, Veronica,* and *Love and Mr. Lewisham,* in which the interest is not so much in a problem as in character and the life portrayed. His *Mr. Brittling Sees It Through* will probably live as one of the best of the war novels.

Arnold Bennett (XI) (1867–). Like Wells, Bennett has been a prolific writer. The novels for which he is best known show him as a realist. These are *The Old Wives' Tales* and the three novels constituting the Clayhanger triology—*Clayhanger,* *Hilda Lessways,* and *These Twain.* The scene of these novels is the Five Towns—Newcastle, Stoke, Burslem, Tunstall, and Longton—in the industrial and mining region of England. Bennett has no doctrine to preach nor any reform program. He is concerned only with picturing the effect of life in the Five Towns upon not so much the working man as the lower middle class of which Clayhanger, the owner of a small printing establishment, is a good example. The triology follows the development of Clayhanger's youth and his relations with Hilda Lessways whom he marries. Bennett's novels are not stimulating or exciting but they portray life with careful fidelity.

John Galsworthy (1867–). Galsworthy is perhaps the greatest living novelist. He is a realist who has given us a number of novels picturing to us the characters and the background of the English upper middle class, their conventions, philosophy of life, self-satisfaction, complacency, manners, and outlook. Galsworthy goes about his work in an impartial, rather cool manner, keeping himself pretty well out of his novels, picturing for us men and women who "like flies caught among the impalpable and smoky threads of cobwebs, . . . struggle in the webs of their own natures, giving here a start, there a pitiful small jerking, long sustained, and falling into stillness." Galsworthy's principal novels are *The Island Pharisees, The Man of Property, The Country House, The White Monkey, The Silver Spoon, The Patrician, Fraternity, The Dark Flower,* and *The Freelands. The Man of Property* is the first of a series of novels dealing with the Forsyte family to which the name *The Forsyte Saga* is given. Other novels in this series are *In Chancery* and *To Let.*

PART TWO—AMERICAN LITERATURE

Relationship to English Literature. In 1820 Sydney Smith, an English reviewer, asked the question, "Who reads an American book?" At the time, this question was somewhat embarrassing to Americans, for it carried the implication that American literature was inferior to that of England and that America possessed no independent culture of its own. In Smith's day the question had some point, for although America had achieved political independence from England it was still dependent upon England not only for books, but for literary inspiration and models. It might be said that the roots of American literature were still in English literary soil. Even late in the nineteenth century William Dean Howells called American literature "a condition of English literature." Only as America developed a culture of its own and interests different from those of the mother country, did it develop a literature of its own. The designation given to the first American poet of consequence, William Cullen Bryant, who was called "The American Wordsworth," is symbolic of the dependence of American upon English letters. This dependence has perhaps been exaggerated, for until recent years many writers who were dealing with the "American scene" in an original and individualistic manner have been somewhat neglected.

It has been customary in the past to designate American writers by a historical grouping such as Writers of the Colonial Period, Writers of the Revolutionary Period, Writers of the National Period, etc. Such a grouping has tended to dissociate them from movements of which they were a part. For example, many of the writers of the Colonial Period might properly be considered in connection with the English Puritan Movement, for we must not forget that they were after all Englishmen resident in the American colonies; and many of our nineteenth century writers might properly be considered in connection with the Romantic Movement. By the time we get down to such a writer as O. Henry, for example, we sense a sharp divergence from England. By way of illustration, take his short story *The Gift of the Magi.* Its characters and setting are not only typically American, but its atmosphere, its spirit, and its colloquial diction are American also.

I Colonial Writers (1621–1776)

Literature in Colonial New England. It was in New England that the beginnings of what we may call American literature were made.

Here the Puritan movement produced two poets, one of them a woman, Anne Bradstreet (1613–1672), wife of the Puritan governor, Bradstreet, who produced a volume of poems printed in London in 1650. The title page of this volume declares her "The Tenth Muse, Lately Sprung up in America," and describes her poems as compiled "with great variety of Wit and Learning, full of delight." Their author possessed genuine poetic gift. Her poems show traces of Donne and Herbert, but especially of Du Bartas, a Huguenot religious poet known in England in translation. The second was a man, Michael Wigglesworth, (1631–1705) whose poem, *The Day of Doom; or, A Poetical Description of the great and last Judgment,* published before the appearance of *Paradise Lost,* is said to have greatly exceeded Milton's masterpiece in popularity in New England. It is a poem whose wooden verse and lack of imagination betray the paucity of its literary merit. Its appeal was based upon its content. It spoke sound Calvanistic doctrine as is shown by the stanza which declares that to die in infancy is a crime which must forever debar infants from the bliss to come:

> A crime it is; therefore in bliss
>   You may not hope to dwell;
> But unto you I shall allow
>   The easiest room in Hell.

The outstanding prose writers of colonial New England were clergymen. The first of these to be noted is the Puritan, Cotton

Mather, a Harvard graduate and a Boston minister. Mather was a voluminous writer, mostly on religious or theological matters. His *Essays to do Good*, says Franklin, "perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life." He is remembered in history for his part in the Salem witchcraft which was the occasion of a pamphlet bearing the title *The Wonders of the Invisible World.* OBSERVATIONS *as well Historical as Theological, upon the Nature, the Number, and the Operations of the* DEVILS—a title which sufficiently indicates the nature of the work. Mather's masterpiece, perhaps, is his *Magnalia Christi Americana, or the Great Acts of Christ in America,* which was an ecclesiastical history of New England from 1620 to 1698. Far superior to Mather in literary merit is Jonathan Edwards, a graduate of Yale, who may also claim rank as a philosopher. Edwards was dominated by the sovereignty, the majesty, and the grace of God, and he possessed a convincing power of utterance. A good illustration of his clear and powerful prose is to be seen in his famous sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,* preached at Enfield, Connecticut, in 1741, in which he declared, "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathesome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight." Despite the rigor of his doctrine, unlike Mather, Edwards was a man of gentle nature. He died in 1758, president of Princeton University. The well-known poem, *The One Hoss Shay* by Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was a descendant of Edwards, is a satire on the latter's religious dogma.

Two other prose writers of the colonial period deserve notice. One of these is Samuel Sewall (1652–1730). Sewall was a Harvard graduate and at one time Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. In this latter capacity he was one of those who sat at the trial of the Salem witches. He afterwards confessed that some of his rulings in this trial were wrong and for the last thirty-nine years of his life he spent one day a year in fasting and prayer by way of penance. He was one of the first men in New England to raise his voice against slavery, publishing a tract against it in 1700. The most interesting thing which came from his pen, however, is his diary which has caused him to be called "The American Pepys." That part of it which gives an account of his courting of Madam Winthrop is often quoted. The entry for November 7 shows Sewall pursuing a forlorn hope: "I went to Mad. Winthrop; found her rocking her little Katee in the Cradle. I excus'd my coming so late (near Eight). She set me an arm'd chair and Cusheon; and so the Cradle was between her arm'd chair and mine. Gave her the remnant of my Almonds . . . I said I came to enquire whether she had alter'd her mind since Friday, or remained of the same mind still. She said, Thereabouts. I told her I loved her, and was so fond as to think that she loved me: she said had a respect for me. . . . I would endeavour to contain myself, and not go to sollicit her to do that which she could not Consent to. Took leave of her. As came down the steps she bid me have a Care. Treated me Courteously. . . . Jehovah jireh!"

Among the most interesting and readable pieces of prose which the early colonial period produced are the records of Indian captivities, especially that of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson who was carried away from Lancaster when that town was sacked during King Philip's War, and the narrative of *God's Protecting Providence In the Remarkable Deliverance of Robert Barrow, Faithfully Related by Jonathan Dickenson.*

The one book of our early colonial period, however, which is sure of a permanent place in our literature is the *Journal* of John Woolman. Woolman was a New Jersey tailor and a Quaker. His *Journal* is a record of his journeys to various places in the colonies, interspersed with his comment on slavery, war, and other evils, and here and there revealing his mind turned inward in self-examination. The book is written in a simple, clear, unaffected style, and is notably free from any attempt to imitate the English prose writers of his day.

II The Revolutionary Period (1776–1800)

The great bulk of writing done during the later colonial period was prose. It consisted of pamphlets, speeches, addresses, letters, essays, and political documents rising out of the struggle for independence and the problems of organizing the new republic.

Benjamin Franklin (X). The greatest single piece of literature produced during these years was the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* which is printed together with an account of Franklin's life in Prose and Poetry *Tenth Year*.

Speeches, Letters, Pamphlets, etc. A catalogue listing only the titles of the great number of writings on the subject of politics and government produced between Otis's famous speech *In Opposition to the Writs of Assistance* delivered in 1761 and the *Farewell Address* of Washington given in 1796 would be a good sized volume. Conspicuous in this great body of speech and writing are the orators James Otis, Boston patriot and lawyer, whose famous oration has been mentioned above, and Patrick Henry of Virginia, whose great speech before the Virginia Assembly in March 1775 has made the words "Give me Liberty or give me death!" known to every American schoolboy. Other men whose writings stand out from the great mass are Thomas Jefferson, who drafted the Declaration of Independence; Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, from whose pens came the clear, well-reasoned arguments which made up the *Federalist* papers; John Dickinson, the author of *Letters of a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, an able statement of the cause of the Colonies; Thomas Paine, whose pamphlet *Common Sense* was a force in creating sentiment for independence; and George Washington (XII), whose *Farewell Address* is printed with comment in this volume.

Poetry. The Revolution was productive of a number of ballads and narrative poems commemorating American victories or satirizing the British. A number of these were the work of a group of three poets, very popular in their day, known as the "Hartford Wits" or "Connecticut Wits." These were John

Trumbull whose masterpiece, *McFingal*, a mock-epic, in the witty couplets of Butler's *Hudibras*, was directed against an imaginary Tory squire; Joel Barlow, author of an ambitious epic, *The Columbiad*, and a humorous poem dedicated to Martha Washington, entitled *The Hasty Pudding;* and Timothy Dwight, later president of Yale College, from whose indefatigable pen came two long poems, *Greenfield Hill*, which shows the influence of Goldsmith, Milton and Pope, and *The Conquest of Canaan*, an ambitious epic in 10,000 lines.

Philip Freneau (IX) (1752–1832). The outstanding poet of this period, sometimes called "The Poet of the American Revolution" was Philip Freneau, whose splendid ballad *Captain Barney's Victory* together with an account of his life is to be found in PROSE AND POETRY *Ninth Year*. Frenau had a genuine poetic gift, and while much of what he wrote is of little merit, his poems *The Wild Honeysuckle* and *The Indian Burying-Ground* are entitled to a place in any anthology of American poetry.

Charles Brockden Brown (1771–1810). Brown, a Philadelphian, sometimes called "The Father of American Fiction" is the first professional man of letters in our literature. His decision to make literature his profession seems to have been a result of his continuous ill health. Although he was a contributor to a number of magazines, the bulk of his work consisted of novels produced in rapid succession between 1798 and 1801. While Brown was deficient as a literary craftsman, especially in the development of character and in the construction of his plots, he produced a number of pages of vivid, realistic writing. His masterpiece is *Wieland*. He has a tendency to the melodramatic and the weird. Brown attracted some attention in England, and the novelist, Mrs. Shelley, made use of his description of the yellow fever in Philadelphia in one of her books.

American Drama. This period saw the beginning of a native drama in *The Battle of Bunker Hill*, written in 1776 by Hugh H. Brackenridge; *The Prince of Parthia* by Thomas Godfrey, performed in 1767 in Philadelphia, said to be the first American play to be produced on the professional stage; and *The Contrast*, a comedy by Royall Tyler, performed in New York, April 16, 1787.

III THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
(1800–1865)

On Grouping American Writers. As we have seen, the first center of literary activity in America was colonial New England. During the Revolution, Philadelphia which was the political capital might also have laid claim to being the literary center of America. "The first monthly magazine, the first daily newspaper, the first religious magazine, the first religious weekly, the first penny paper, mathematical journal, juvenile magazine, and illustrated comic paper ever published in the United States had started on their career in Philadelphia; and that city produced, still more memorably, in Benjamin Franklin the first American writer to gain a permanent foreign reputation; and America's first imaginative writer and first professional writer of any description, in Charles Brockden Brown, the novelist." * The next center of literary activity was in New York in which lived the first three outstanding men of letters to be born in America after the Declaration of Independence, as well as a number of lesser note. The student should not get the opinion, however, that literary activities had ceased in other sections of the country. This would be to ignore such men as William Gilmore Simms, a Southern poet and novelist of considerable consequence. This geographical grouping, while a conventional and convenient method, is not at all significant.

Washington Irving. Washington Irving was born in New York City in 1783, the son of a leading merchant. Health prevented his going to college and he spent some time in his youth traveling in Europe. He was admitted to the bar, but never practised, literature having had a greater fascination for him. He made his first appearance in print as a humorist in the *Salamagundi Papers*, but his first book was the famous *Knicker-*

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* Quoted from *A Reader's History of American Literature*, by Higginson and Boynton.

bocker History of New York, a humorous account of New York under the Dutch. In 1814 Irving went to England and during the following seventeen years he lived abroad. In London in 1820 *The Sketch Book* was published. "It is by this volume," says one writer, "that he is today best known among readers on both sides of the Atlantic. The book has been translated into almost every European tongue, and for many years it served, and still serves, in France, in Germany, and in Italy as a model of English style and as a textbook from which students are taught their English." * *The Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall,* which followed, established Irving's literary reputation at home and abroad. From 1826 to 1830 he was attaché to the legation at Madrid and from his life in Spain came his *Columbus, The Conquest of Granada,* and one of his most interesting collections of short pieces, *Legends of the Alhambra.* In 1829 he was made a member of the Royal Academy of History in Madrid, and in 1830 on his return to England he was voted the gold medal of the Royal Society of Literature and given the degree of Doctor of Laws by Oxford. He returned to New York in 1832. A journey through the Southwest produced an interesting travel sketch, *A Tour of the Prairies.* Putting aside a political career, he formed in 1848 a connection with the publishing house of Putnam for whom he did what is perhaps his greatest work, the *Life of Washington* which was completed on his seventy-sixth birthday in 1859. He died in November, 1859, and was buried in the graveyard of Sleepy Hollow Church. In such stories as *Rip Van Winkle* and the *Legend of Sleepy Hollow,* Irving turned to the American scene for his material. The first of these is sometimes called the beginning of the local color story, which is a distinct American contribution to literature.

James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851). In James Fenimore Cooper, born in 1789 at Burlington, New Jersey and growing up as a boy in the frontier village of Cooperstown on Otsego Lake in New York, we find the first American novelist of note whose stories strike their roots deeply into the soil of the new land. The story of Cooper's first novel is interesting. As a result of his criticism of an English novel which he was reading, his wife challenged him to write a better one, and as a result he produced *Precaution*, the scene of which is laid in England. The book did not satisfy him for he was "ashamed to have fallen into the track of imitation." "I endeavored," he continued, "to repay the wrong done to my own views, by producing a work which would be purely American, and of which love of country should be the theme." Next came *The Spy*, the success of which encouraged him to take up writing as a profession. This was followed by *The Pioneers* and one of his greatest books, *The Pilot*, a sea story which came out of his own experience at sea in the navy. Cooper did a great deal of writing. His greatest accomplishment, however, consists of his novels of pioneer life, notably, *The Deer Slayer*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pathfinder*, and *The Pioneers*, collectively known as *The Leather Stocking Tales*, constituting a kind of prose epic of the American pioneer. Cooper used to be called "the American Scott" to whom he is inferior in literary craftsmanship but whom he exceeds in power and vigor.

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* *Cambridge History of American Literature,* Vol. 1, p. 249.

William Cullen Bryant (IX) (1794–1878). Bryant used to be called "the American Wordsworth" for the reason that he is chief poet of nature in American literature and displays a touch of Wordsworth's mysticism, seeing as the latter did in external nature

> An emanation of the indwelling Life,
> A visible token of the upholding Love,
> That are the soul of this great universe.

He is, however, no mere imitator. When he wrote of nature, he wrote with his eye on the object, as may be illustrated by the two poems *To a Waterfowl* and *The Yellow Violet*. His philosophy finds expression in his well-known poem *Thanatopsis*. In his later years Bryant turned to translation and produced in his *Homer* what may be called the first distinguished American translation.

Minor Poets. Contemporary with Bryant were a number of writers of verse born before 1795, among whom the following deserve mention: James Kirke Paulding, who wrote a somewhat realistic poem of American life called *The Backwoodsman;* James Gates Percival, whose chief poem is *Seneca Lake;* Samuel Woodworth, author of *The Old Oaken Bucket;* Fitz-Greene Halleck, remembered for his *Marco Bozzaris;* Joseph Rodman Drake, whose best known poems are *The American Flag* and *The Culprit Fay;* and John Howard Payne, author of *Home, Sweet Home.*

Minor Novelists. Four contemporaries of Cooper, all born by 1795 deserve mention. The literary center of Baltimore produced John Neal and a better novelist, John Pendleton Kennedy, whose novel, *Horse-Shoe Robinson* is a tale of the Revolution in the Carolinas and whose *Rob of the Bowl* is laid in colonial Maryland. Virginia produced Nathaniel B. Tucker who wrote two books of considerable merit, *The Partisan Leader* and *George Balcombe,* the last of which Poe thought the best American novel of his time. In New England, Daniel Pierce Thompson wrote the Vermont classic, *The Green Mountain Boys.*

The Second Generation. Between the years 1803 and 1819 were born ten men who were to add lustre to American letters.

The New England Group. All these men were either actively identified with or influenced by what is called the Transcendental Movement which may be briefly described as the English Romantic Movement transferred to New England and modified by New England character and conditions. Four of these writers, Ralph Waldo Emerson (IX, XI), Nathaniel Hawthorne (IX, XI), Edgar Allan Poe (IX), and Henry David Thoreau (XI), have received adequate treatment elsewhere.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (IX) (1807–1882). "Longfellow performed," says one writer, "the threefold function of transmitter of Old World culture to the New, shaper into verse of aboriginal, colonial, and Revolutionary material, both legendary and historical, and lyric interpreter of the simple thoughts and feelings of an unsophisticated people." Longfellow left a great body of writing including short lyrics, ballads, long narrative pieces, romantic drama, sonnets, translations, a book of travel sketches, a mystery play, and a prose romance. Some of his best poetry is to be found in his sonnets which are probably as little known to the general public as anything he wrote. His best work was done in the field of narrative poetry and simple lyrics. His travels in Europe produced a number of his best known narrative poems such as *The Bell of Atri*, *King Robert of Sicily*, *Hyperion*, *The Belfrey of Bruges*, *The Golden Legend*, *The Saga of King Olaf*, and a number of shorter poems based on his study of German, Swedish, and Danish literature. His poems of American background are perhaps even yet better known, the chief of these are *Hiawatha*, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, *Evangeline*, and ballads such as *Paul Revere's Ride*, *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, *The Skeleton in Armor*, and *The Village Blacksmith*. Perhaps his best known lyric poem is *A Psalm of Life*. He only occasionally sounds the personal note, as in *My Lost Youth*. On the whole, his poems are lacking in intensity of feeling, yet they strike a responsive cord in the popular heart and entitle him to be called "The Household Poet."

John Greenleaf Whittier (IX) (1807–1892). Whittier more than any of his contemporaries was the poet of New England. His poems have the smack and tang of elemental things about them. They root deep in New England soil. *Snow-Bound* has been compared with *The Cottar's Saturday Night* as doing for New England what Burns did for Scotland. It is a faithful and accurate picture of a rural life that no longer exists. Whittier's *Songs of Labor* and such a poem as *Conductor Bradley* show a sympathy with the common man and a sincerity which is not to be felt in the *Village Blacksmith*. Some of Whittier's best poems are his ballads of which *Barclay of Ury*, *Skipper Ireson's Ride*, *Maud Muller* and *Barbara Frietchie* are good examples. Whittier, though perhaps not the literary craftsman that some of his contemporaries were, possessed more poetic fire and was closer than they to life.

Oliver Wendell Holmes (IX) (1809–1894). Holmes was both a prose writer and a poet. His chief prose work was a series of delightful essays, touched with a droll humor and impregnated with common sense, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.* He is at his best in what is known as occasional verse. Only now and then did he attempt something in a serious vein, of which the best example is *The Chambered Nautilus.* His outstanding characteristic was a genial and kindly humor. He alone in our literature has Charles Lamb's gift of mingling humor and pathos, as in *The Last Leaf.*

James Russell Lowell (IX) (1819–1891). Lowell produced a considerable amount of both prose and poetry in the leisure intervals of a busy life. His best prose is to be found in a number of critical essays in the volumes *Among My Books* and *My Study Windows.* For his *Biglow Papers* he deserves a place among American humorists and interpreters of New England life. His inspiration was largely literary. His best known poem is perhaps *The Vision of Sir Launfal.* Of his lyrics, *The First Snow-Fall* is the one that more than all others comes from his heart.

William Gilmore Simms (1806–1870). Among our early novelists Simms is entitled to stand next to Cooper. He was born at Charleston, South Carolina, where he grew up, a somewhat studious, scholarly boy. By profession he was a lawyer. His books, however, show him to have been a born story-teller, and he was also a poet of considerable ability which a piece like *The Lost Pleiad* shows. His chief works are *Martin Faber, Guy Rivers, The Yemassee,* a tale of the Yemassee War of 1715, and *The Cassique of Kiawah.* The circumstances of his life show him to have been a heroic character.

Herman Melville (1819–1891). Herman Melville was born in New York, the grandson of Major Thomas Melville, the subject of Holmes's famous poem, *The Last Leaf.* After a short time at school in Albany, he shipped on a New Bedford whaler bound for the Pacific. Resenting the treatment accorded him aboard ship, he left ship at the Island of Nukuheva and wandered into the cannibal valley Typee. His experiences gave rise to the book *Typee* and to a sequel *Omoo.* His masterpiece is probably *Moby*

Dick, the story of the pursuit of the white whale by the half mad ship-captain Ahab. It is one of the greatest of sea stories.

Minor Poets. To this generation belong also a number of poets now chiefly remembered for one or more poems. Among these are: George Morris, who wrote *Woodman, Spare That Tree;* Albert Pike, author of *Dixie;* Theodore O'Hara, who wrote *The Bivouac of the Dead;* Henry Timrod, a South Carolina poet of considerable merit whose best poem is the ode *Sleep Sweetly in Your Humble Graves;* Paul H. Hayne, another South Carolina poet, whose *Aspects of the Pines* is one of his best poems; Stephen C. Foster, author of *My Old Kentucky Home* and *Old Folks at Home;* Thomas Buchanan Read, remembered for his *Sheridan's Ride;* and Julia Ward Howe, author of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic.*

Other Prose Writers. Among writers of fiction, this generation produced Richard Henry Dana, author of *Two Years Before the Mast;* Harriet Beecher Stowe, remembered for her *Uncle Tom's Cabin;* Edward Everett Hale, who wrote *The Man Without a Country;* and Donald Grant Mitchell, who under the pseudonym of Ik Marvel wrote *Reveries of a Bachelor.* To this generation belong also three historians, all Bostonians, of authoritative scholarship, each of whom is the master of a style that entitles them to a place in literature. These are William Hickling Prescott, author of *Ferdinand and Isabella, The Conquest of Mexico* and *The Conquest of Peru;* John Lothrop Motley, best known for *The Rise of the Dutch Republic;* and Francis Parkman, in both literature and history, the greatest of the three, whose books deal with the French in America. His *Oregon Trail* based upon a journey through the West, is still a classic read in American schools. Among the statesmen and orators of these years who are entitled to mention in a sketch of our literature, Abraham Lincoln, many of whose speeches are now included among the greatest classics in the English tongue; Daniel Webster (XII), one of whose great orations is printed in this series, and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, master of a calm, clear prose.

IV LAST HALF OF NINETEENTH CENTURY (1865–1900)

The year which saw the end of the Civil War may be taken as marking the beginning of a new period in our literature. Poe and Hawthorne were dead and the great contributions of The Second Generation had been made. Emerson had little of significance to say after 1860. Lowell had turned to criticism, Longfellow to translation, Simms to editing, Whittier was silent after 1866, and although Holmes continued to write, his best work was done. The great issues which had agitated the country before the Civil War were now settled and attention was turned to new problems. There followed a period of expansion during which the West was settled and the East turned to the development of commerce and industry. There now come upon the scene a great number of writers, most of whom born before the Civil War were to live down into the twentieth century. In various ways they reflect the changes which were taking place in American life.

Walt Whitman (IX) (1819–1892). Whitman was a contemporary of the New England group, but he cannot be said to have had much in common with them. His first volume, *Leaves of Grass,* published in 1855, was an attempt to put America and its turbulent democracy "freely, fully, and truly on record." At the time when the poetic power of his contemporaries was waning, his was approaching its height. Nothing like *Leaves of Grass* had ever been seen in America, or anywhere else for that matter. It was wholly new in form, written in strong, free, unmetrical rhythms without rhyme—what we are accustomed to call in our day free verse. In content it was still more astonishing,—even shocking to Whitman's generation. In it he announced himself as the poet of democracy and of America. His inspiration was not in literature but in life itself, and here was intense life, tremendous imaginative power, and the vigor of the tides. Moreover, here was a complete break with the traditions of the old world. "I abandon'd the conventional themes," he wrote years afterward, "which do not appear in it: none of the stock ornamentation, or choice plots of love or war, or high, exceptional personages of Old-World song; nothing, as I may say, for beauty's sake—no legend, or myth, or romance, nor euphemism, nor rhyme." The influence of Whitman at home and abroad has been tremendous; and with the possible exception of Poe, he is the greatest poet which America has yet produced. Some of the most representative of his shorter poems are *Out of The Cradle Endlessly Rocking, When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed, I Hear America Singing*, and *Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night.* His war experiences are given to us in a series of sketches called *Specimen Days* and he has made a significant contribution to American criticism in his essays especially in *A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads.*

Other Poets. Among the other poets of this period who are of significance in the development of poetry are: Charles F. Hoffman, Emily Dickinson, Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller, Eugene Field, James Whitcomb Riley, Richard Hovey, and Paul Lawrence Dunbar, all of whom receive adequate treatment in PROSE AND POETRY *Ninth Year.* Others of whom which mention should be made are Edmund Clarence Stedman and Richard Watson Gilder, continuers of the older tradition in poetry, William Vaughn Moody, author of the ode *On A Soldier Fallen in the Philippines* and a number of dramas in blank verse; Edith Thomas, best known for her poem, *Frost To-night;* Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Bayard Taylor; John Hay, author of *Pike County Ballads,* the best of which is *Jim Bludso;* John Bannister, Father Tabb, author of a number of brief, crystal lyrics such as *Brotherhood* and *The Water Lily;* and Madison Cawein, a Kentucky poet who has been called the "Keats of the South."

Sidney Lanier (IX) (1842-1881). The most important poet and man of letters which the New South has produced is Sidney Lanier. He has made a distinguished contribution to criticism in *The Science of English Verse* and *The English Novel.* It is his poetry, however, which secures him a permanent place in American literature. The feeling in it is true and sincere, and his descriptions of nature vivid and accurate. An outstanding quality of his verse is its rich melody. His chief poems are:

The Symphony, The Marshes of Glynn, The Song of the Chattahoochee and *The Revenge of Hamish.*

William Dean Howells (1837–1920). Howells was born in Ohio, the son of a country printer and editor. His schooling was little; he educated himself by diligent reading in English and classic literatures. His method was that of a realist. His chief novels are: *A Modern Instance, The Rise of Silas Lapham,* his masterpiece, and *The Minister's Charge.* As in *The Rise of Silas Lapham,* where the title character is a self-made man, typical of American success, his novels deal with American life.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain) (IX) (1855–1910). Perhaps the most typical American author of the period is Mark Twain. He was born in the middle West at Florida, Missouri in 1855 and grew up in the village of Hannibal. He had little formal education. His experience with life was gained as a printer in his home town and in larger cities, as a Mississippi pilot, and as a prospector in Nevada mining camps. His literary career may be said to have begun with a contribution to a Nevada newspaper where he first used the name "Mark Twain." In 1865 while he was working on a San Francisco newspaper he wrote his celebrated story, *The Jumping Frog,* which was published in New York and brought him to the attention of the public. Like Walt Whitman whom he resembles in having been quite free from the literary influences of the schools, he is an innovator whose literary independence is not disputed. He is generally thought of as a humorist, but he was no mere clown. He is the embodiment of what we might call the American "Comic Spirit," for much of his humor proceeds from his good natured ridicule of institutions, conventions and manners which strangle humanity. He was a voluminous writer, at his best, perhaps, in his travel books such as *Innocents Abroad* and *Life on the Mississippi,* and in *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer.*

Minor Novelists and Romancers. Among these are a considerable number who are entitled to mention: Henry James, author of *Daisy Miller;* S. Weir Mitchell, whose *Hugh Wynne* is a stirring tale of the Revolution; Francis Hopkinson Smith, creator of *Colonel Carter of Cartersville;* Thomas Nelson Page, author of *Red Rock,* a Civil War story; Frances Hodgson Burnett, best known probably for *The Secret Garden;* Margaretta Deland, who wrote *The Awakening of Helena Ritchie;* Stewart Edward White, whose best book is *The Blazed Trail;* Frank Norris, a realist, author of *The Octopus* and *The Pit;* Winston Churchill, whose historical romances, *Richard Carvel* and *The Crisis,* together with his story of New England political life, *Coniston,* are among the most interesting books of the period; Jack London, best known for *The Call of the Wild* and *Sea Wolf;* Helen Hunt Jackson, author of *Ramona;* F. Marion Crawford, author of *Katherine Lauderdale* and *The Ralstons;* Lew Wallace, who wrote *Ben-Hur;* Stephen Crane, best known for *The Red Badge of Courage;* Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian;* Paul Leicester Ford, author of *Janice Meredith* and *The Honorable Peter Stirling,* a novel based on the life of Grover Cleveland; Meredith Nicholson, who wrote *The Port of Missing Men;* James Lane Allen, known for *The Reign of Law;* Edward Noyes Westcott, who wrote *David Harum;* Louisa Alcott, well known for *Little Women;* Jane G. Austin, whose stories of colonial days, *Standish of Standish* and *Betty Alden,* are still popular; and Edward Eggleston, well known for *The Hoosier Schoolmaster.*

V The American Short Story

The literary form known as the short story may be taken as a kind of symbol of American literary independence, for America has taken the lead in the development of it, a development which bears a close relationship to conditions of American life. The short story was called forth by the demand for something which can be read in the brief intervals of leisure snatched from a busy life, and has been stimulated by the development of the magazine in America—a tendency which Poe noted in his day. In the development of the short story, Washington Irving is the first conspicuous pioneer. If *Rip Van Winkle,* however, is compared with *The Gift of the Magi* by O. Henry, the reader will note a great difference. The first is more of a tale—it is diffuse and leisurely, whereas the second is compact, and swift, has a definite plot and develops a single situation. The story as illustrated by O. Henry is the result of a contributions by a number of writers. Chief among these are Nathaniel Hawthorne (IX) and Edgar Allan Poe (IX). Hawthorne learned how to confine a story to a single situation. Poe further emphasized unity in the short story by selecting details to produce what he called totality of effect. Other important contributions were made by Rose Terry Cook who went to real life for her situations; Edward Everett Hale, author of *The Man Without a Country,* who brought to the short story the gift of writing fictitious narrative so that it sounded true; Henry James, who gave the short story a psychological twist and put emphasis on the handling of character; and Bret Harte, who developed the story of local color. Others who helped bring the short story to perfection are Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman who wrote stories of New England life; George W. Cable, author of *Old Creole Days* whose stories are laid in Louisiana; Thomas Bailey Aldrich, best known for *Marjorie Daw;* Frank Stockton, author of *The Lady or the Tiger;* Ambrose Bierce; H. C. Bunner; Mary N. Murfrey (Charles Egbert Craddock); Richard Harding Davis; Jack London; Joel Chandler Harris; and O. Henry (IX).

The twentieth century has seen a rapid development in the short story. Stories have been written by every novelist of consequence and by thousands of lesser note whose pens fill our magazines with their productions. No short list can be complete. Among the outstanding short story writers of more recent years are Ralph D. Paine (IX), Wilbur Daniel Steele, Joseph C. Lincoln, Zona Gale, Gertrude Atherton, Hamlin Garland, Booth Tarkington (IX), Fannie Hurst, Octavus Roy Cohen, Henry van Dyke, E. Thompson Seton, Anna Katherine Green, Ben Ames Williams, and Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

VI THE AMERICAN HUMORISTS

Nothing in our literature is more typically American than our humor. It reflects the tastes, sympathies, aversions, and character of the great public, for the things which people laugh at, and the way in which they laugh are sure indices of their make-up. Our humor is not distinguished for its subtlety; it is on the whole boisterous, hearty, tending to caricature, healthy, and always clean.

Humor made its appearance early in our literature but its great development came after 1800 with an outpouring of humorous sketches, letters, songs, and verse satires, fictitious biographies, and adventures, and accounts of the doings and sayings of eccentric characters. Among the humorists most popular with our grandfathers were Henry Wheeler Shaw, better known as "Josh Billings"; David Ross Locke, who wrote under the name "Petroleum V. Nasby"; and Charles Farrar Brown, known as "Artemus Ward." All of these men made use of the humor which is to be derived from poor grammar and bizarre phonetic misspellings. A good example of both their subject matter and form may be taken from Josh Billings's essay on *The Bumblebee:* "The bumblebee iz a kind ov big fly who goes muttering and swareing around the lots, during the summer, looking after little boys to sting them, and stealing hunny out ov the dandylions and thissels. He iz mad all the time about sumthing, and don't seem to kare a kuss what people think ov him. . . . The smartest thing about the bumblebee iz their stinger." A humorist of a somewhat different type was Edgar Wilson Nye, known as "Bill Nye." Nye eschewed the bizarre spellings and grammar of those mentioned above and depended for his effect rather upon a kind of inspired idiocy. A good example of him at his best is given by Stephen Leacock in his *American Humor:* "The condition of our navy need not give rise to any serious apprehension. The yard in which it is placed at Brooklyn is enclosed by a high brick wall affording it ample protection. A man on board the *Atlanta* at anchor at Brooklyn is quite as safe as he would be at home. The guns on board the *Atlanta* are breechloaders; this is a great improvement on the old-style gun, because in former times in case of a naval combat the man who went outside the ship to load the gun while it was raining frequently contracted pneumonia." Among present-day humorists, the one who may be said to belong to the Bill Nye School, is Will Rogers, an example of whose humor is given in PROSE AND POETRY *Eleventh Year.* Another type of humorist popular a generation ago dealt in dialect, making use of German, negro, and Irish dialects. Prominent among these was Charles Godfrey Leland, creator of *Hans Breitman.* The best known of those who have written in the Irish dialect is Finley Peter Dunne, creator of *Mr. Dooley.* Still a different kind of humor is illustrated by George Ade, author of *Fables in Slang.* The first of the "colyumnists," the predecessor of F. P. A. and Don Marquis, is Eugene Field, most of whose poems and comment appeared first in his column "Sharps and Flats" in the *Chicago Record.* Outstanding among writers of humorous poems are John G. Saxe and the more recent writers, Thomas A. Daly (IX), author of *Mia Carlotta,* Charles E. Carryl (IX), author of *Robinson Crusoe's Story,* and Arthur Guiterman (IX) and Mary Carolyn Wells whose poems may be found in periodicals such as *Life* and the *Saturday Evening Post.* Among American humorists must also be reckoned such men as Oliver Wendell Holmes and Mark Twain who are mentioned elsewhere.

VII AMERICAN SONGS AND BALLADS

Our day has witnessed a growing interest in popular songs and ballads. America has produced a great variety of these which may be divided roughly into patriotic songs, hymns, and ballads, these last having some analogy to the English ballads of the fifteenth century. To the first class belong songs which have sprung up during war times. Of these some may be traced to definite authors but many are anonymous. Conspicuous in this class are *Yankee Doodle, Nathan Hale, The Texas Rangers, The Blue and The Gray, When this Cruel War is Over, A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight, Over There,* and *The Long, Long Trail.* To the second class belong a number of revival hymns and that interesting group known as negro spirituals. To the third class belong a number of American adaptations of old English ballads and a still greater number of songs which seem to have grown up in cattle, lumber, and mining camps such as *Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie, The Days of Forty-Nine,* and *The Shanty Boy.* To this class belong also such ballads as *Jesse James* and a number of Mississippi River and railroad ballads. The best known of this latter group is probably *Casey Jones.* One of the best general collections of these songs and ballads is Carl Sandburg's *American Song Bag,* which prints the music for many of them.

VIII The American Drama

Throughout the entire nineteenth century there was a great deal of dramatic writing done in America. Much of this writing, however, was not of consequence as literature. The closing years of the nineteenth century saw a revival of the literary drama. Chief among recent and contemporary dramatists whose plays are entitled to a place in literature are, William Vaughn Moody, author of *The Great Divide;* Josephine Preston Peabody, whose *The Piper* won the Stratford prize in 1910; Percy Mackaye, who wrote *The Canterbury Pilgrims, The Scarecrow,* and *Jeanne D'Arc;* Edna St. Vincent Millay, author of *The King's Henchman;* Eugene O'Neil, author of *The Emperor Jones* and other plays; Booth Tarkington, author of *Clarence;* Susan Glaspell (XII), author of *Suppressed Desires;* and Paul Green, author of *In Aunt Mahaly's Cabin.*

IX Essayists and Miscellaneous Prose Writers

Like every other form of literature, the essay has experienced a great development. American magazines like the *Atlantic Monthly* and other periodicals have offered an outlet for a great number of essayists, formal and informal, who have written on a range of topics as wide as life itself. Among those who have a claim to distinction for both content and style during the latter years of the nineteenth century and more recent times are the following: Charles Eliot Norton, a Harvard scholar and professor, best known for his writings on literature and art, and his letters; George William Curtis, author of a number of delightful travel sketches; Hamilton Wright Mabie, a writer on literary topics; William Winter, a dramatic critic of note; Charles Dudley Warner, author of *Back-log Studies;* Lafcadio Hearn (XI), who wrote of Japan; John Burroughs, John Muir and William Beebe (XI), nature writers; Henry van Dyke (XI), author of *Fisherman's Luck* and *The Blue Flower;* Samuel McCord Crothers, the possessor of a delightful vein of humor; Agnes Repplier, an informal essayist of rare charm; and Christopher Morley (XI), perhaps the most popular of present-day essayists; and last but not least, H. L. Mencken.

X CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE (1900–1930)

The New Poetry. Contemporary verse shows a number of points of difference with that of the generation of Longfellow. The second decade of the present century saw a revolt in full swing against the older poetry. What the critics of the school of Longfellow and Tennyson said sounded very much like what Wordsworth said a hundred or more years ago about the poetry of the classicists. First, they objected to the content of poetry written in the older tradition. They regarded poems like *A Psalm of Life* but the rhymed embodiment of a generality or platitude, and insisted that poetry ought to go to life for its inspiration and material. A second criticism of the older poetry was directed against its form and diction. The newer poets insisted that the older conventional, metrical forms were unsuited to the expression of newer moods and set out to experiment with different rhythms, and especially with free verse. Rhyme, too, came in for an attack and the habit of padding a line to make it come out right. They ridiculed also the older poetic diction, holding up to scorn the "thee's" and "thou's," and the "didst's" and "wouldst's" and the inversions of predicate and subject of former days.

The newer school insisted upon the language of common speech, upon rhythms to suit the mood of the poem, and upon hard, clear imagery. Although a conservative in the battle who did not forsake meter, Robert Frost (IX) illustrates the use in his poems of New England life of both a diction and a rhythm that are conversational. Take for example, *The Runaway*. It reads like ordinary talk, yet it is a poem, written with the art which conceals art.

All the reformers did, after all, was to insist that poetry have the requirements that good poetry has always had, regardless of the age in which it was written. Some of the new school have gone to bizarre extremes and there has been a great deal of experimentation which has produced poetry of little merit, but the effect of the whole movement has been to produce a rebirth of genuine poetry.

Many poets of merit have continued in the old tradition, especially in the use of metrical verse. Edwin Markham (IX) is a good example, but the content of his *The Man with the Hoe* shows him to be sensitive to the changing life of his day. Amy Lowell's poem *Patterns* is an illustration of the successful use of a cadenced verse which effectively employs assonance and rhyme, but here the rhyme is employed much differently from what it is in the older end-rhymed metrical verse.

Some of the newer poets like Hardy and Millay have not hesitated to use archaic and poetic diction wherever they have wished to. This only goes to show that form does not make poetry; simply employing new form will not make a poet, nor using an old one necessarily negative true genius.

The Chief Contemporary Poets. Our chief contemporary poets are Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert L. Frost, Vachel Lindsay, Edwin Markham, Carl Sandburg, and Edna St. Vincent Millay. The first four are represented in PROSE AND POETRY *Ninth Year*, with comment. Carl Sandburg (1878–), was born of Swedish parents at Galesburg, Illinois. His school education ended at thirteen and after varied experiences as driver of a milk wagon, farm hand, and soldier in the Spanish-American War, he entered Lombard College where under the influence of an inspiring teacher he first felt the impulse to write. Sandburg more than any one else is the poet of the worker. He has intense vigor but he is also capable of tenderness. Some of his best known single poems are *Chicago, Prayers of Steel, Grass, The Cool Tombs,* and *Fog.* Millay was born in Maine in 1892 and was graduated from Vassar in 1917. Her first poems were published at the age of twenty, and in 1922 she was given the Pulitzer Prize. Probably her best known poem is one of her first, *Renascence.*

Other Poets. Other later day poets who deserve attention are Amy Lowell, John G. Neihardt, Theodosia Garrison, Joyce Kilmer, James Oppenheim, Margaret Widdemer, Stephen Benet, Witter Bynner and Henry van Dyke, all of whom are represented by poems in PROSE AND POETRY *Ninth Year.* Others are Edgar Lee Masters, universally known for *The Spoon River Anthology,* and William Rose Benet, author of the long narrative poem *John Brown's Body,* George Sterling, William Ellery Leonard, Sara Teasdale, Alan Seeger, and Alfred Kreymborg.

Contemporary Novelists. The contemporary novel shows a strong tendency toward romance on the one hand and one toward stark realism on the other. Our outstanding present day novelists are Booth Tarkington, twice winner of the Pulitzer Prize, once with *The Magnificent Ambersons*, and again with *Alice Adams,* who has written a number of books the best of which are those mentioned and *The Turmoil;* Edith Wharton, whose masterpiece is *Ethan Frome;* Willa Cather, author of *Pioneers, My Antonia, The Professor's House,* and *Death Comes for the Archbishop;* James Branch Cabell, author of *Jurgen,* and a number of romances; Joseph Hergesheimer, whose *Linda Condon* has been called the greatest novel to be written in America since Hawthorne; Thornton Wilder author of the Pulitzer Prize novel, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey;* Edna Ferber, author of *Show Boat;* Sinclair Lewis, author of *Babbitt,* and *Main Street*, a realist and a critic of the social order; and Theodore Dreiser, author of *The American Tragedy,* a realist who has a somewhat mechanical philosophy of life.

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